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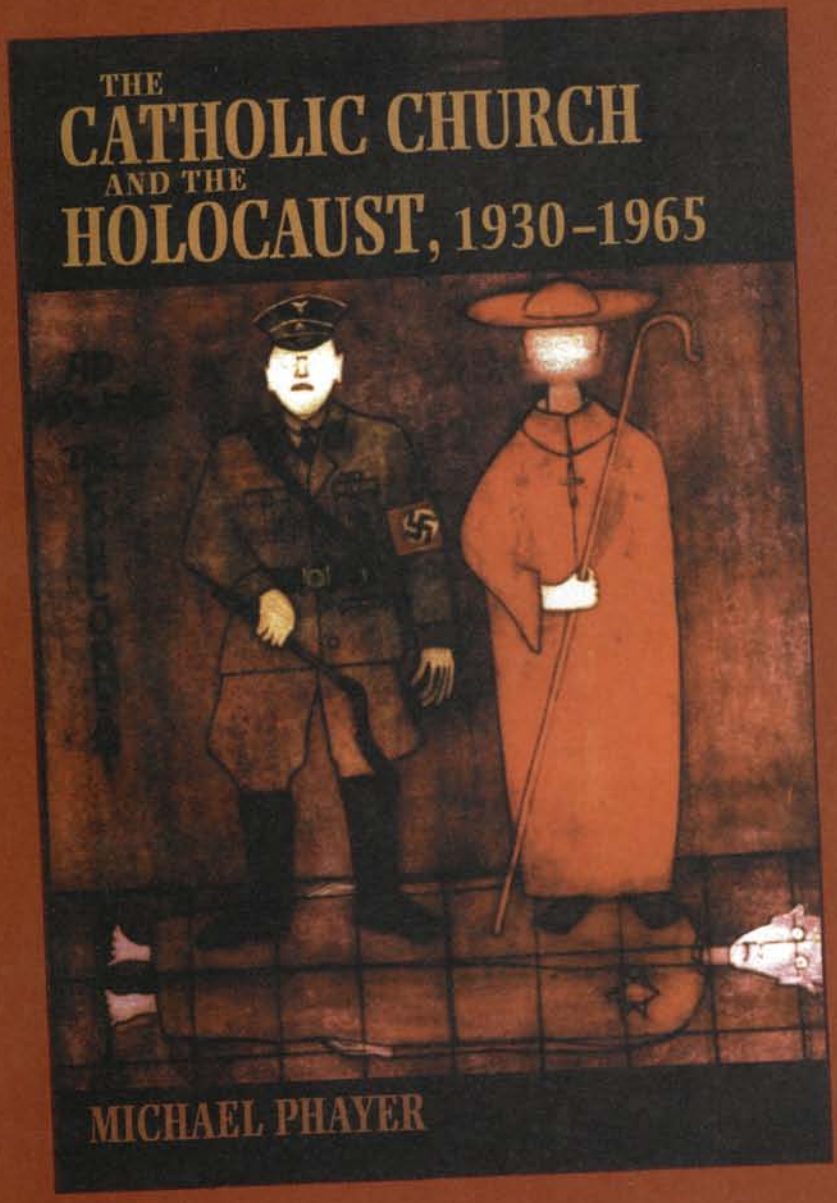

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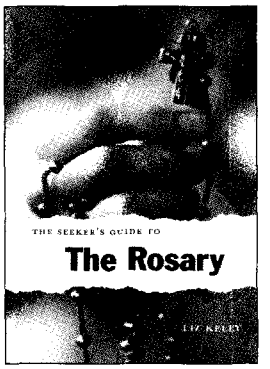

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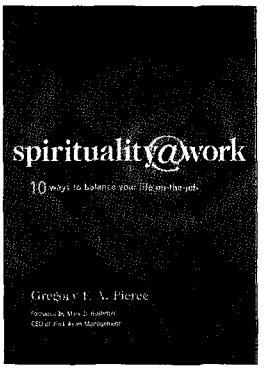

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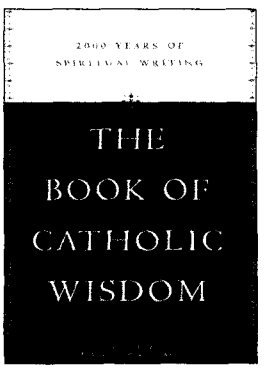

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To the Editors

A heart broken

When I march this year in the "ashen parade," I will be carrying a heart broken by the death of my wife Margaret, who died on December 27 of a malignant brain tumor. "Marchers in an Ashen Parade" (February 23), so beautifully written, helps me to focus more deeply on the meaning of this tragedy as seen with the eyes of faith. A most sincere "thank you" to *Commonweal* and to David Loxterkamp. God bless the work!

ROBERT JOHNSON
Wallingford, Conn.

Confession & remorse

The sacrament of penance is more than ever at a crossroads ("Empty Confessionals," February 23). True, we have become a culture of public confession; and truer yet, we are lost somewhere at the boundary between what has been confessed and how to be even more alive to the collective treachery we may have little capacity to remedy. Following years of teaching graduate courses in pastoral counseling, I have learned that while behaviors and intentions oscillate, true remorse barely beckons. Just being "good" is a behavioral category. Remorsefulness, on the other hand, is a steady, yet uneven process that humanizes as it precedes and follows the most dastardly of our actions. Authentic remorse deepens the human capacity to weep in response to the violations of the helpless; to lament our numbness in the wake of holocausts and wars; and to despair as the earth is ruthlessly depleted of its rich biosphere. Perhaps the sacrament of penance is not so much lost as it is an unceasing event of our remorse within the mystery of an overriding divinity.

E. MARK STERN
New Rochelle, N.Y.

What was missing?

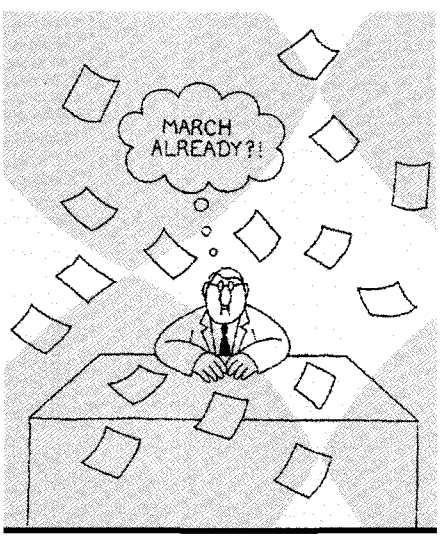
By chance, I was reading Herbert Vorgrimler's *Sacramental Theology* when the February 23 *Commonweal* discussion on confession arrived. He articulates a theological principle germane to our ongoing discernment. "Self-surrender to the liturgy, whose basis and bearer is always Jesus Christ, means in every case (and thus in every sacrament) remembering Jesus. Participation in the liturgy is a celebration of the memory of Jesus, and its intensity depends on the Jesus-mysticism of the human being who is taking part."

This principle certainly does not resolve all the important issues of ecclesial mediation. But it illuminates the foundation and criterion that must be the measure of the church's decisions.

Thirty-five years after Vatican II, we have barely begun to fathom the reality signified by the title of the "Constitution on the Church," *Lumen gentium*. The reference, of course, is not to the church, but to the church's Lord, Jesus Christ. Symptomatic of our failure is that, in the *Commonweal* discussion of reconciliation, the name of the one who effects our reconciliation is nowhere mentioned. Whether the slant be "liberal" or "conservative," the ecclesiocentrism of the pre-Vatican II church seems, alas, alive and not so well.

Karl Rahner once wrote, prophetically: "The Christian of the future will be a mystic...or will not be." At the dawn of the new millennium, we'd better begin to figure that out. Much more than going to confession is at stake.

(REV.) ROBERT P. IMBELLI
Newton Centre, Mass.



Tax-cut compassion

Regarding your February 9 editorial "Taxing Rhetoric," George W. Bush's tax cuts benefit taxpayers only, not those too poor to pay taxes. The more you have, the more compassion you get—that's what the poor believe.

A more compassionate option might be to divide the $1.6 trillion in tax cuts among the 40 million Americans without health insurance. Each would receive $4,000 a year for ten years—more than enough for excellent health insurance.

NOEL KREBS
Goshen, N.Y.

In fairness to the pope

I share some of Luke Timothy Johnson's misgivings about Pope John Paul II's gender language and biblical exegesis, but was disappointed by Johnson's shallow treatment of the pope's ethics ("A Disembodied 'Theology of the Body,'" January 26).

Particularly in light of Johnson's strong charge of complicity with genocide, I cannot fathom why he misrepresents John Paul II's views, assuming that they represent an "act-centered morality." A cursory reading of the pope's corpus (particularly *Love and Responsibility* and *The Acting Person*), reveals a sophisticated ethic of personhood bearing little resemblance to this "act-centered" caricature.

In his *Theology of the Body* lectures, the pope grounds human dignity in the image of God. Humans are precious because they can emulate the self-giving love of the Trinity. Analyzing this love, the pope links acts and virtues, maintaining that we should never use persons merely as a means to an end. This defense of the value of

(Continued on page 43)

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The diversity dilemma

Is affirmative action the victim of its own success? That's one conclusion to be drawn from *Gratz* v. *Bollinger* and *Grutter* v. *Bollinger*, two cases challenging affirmative-action policies at the University of Michigan. Affirmative action has always counterposed two basic aspects of the American notion of equal opportunity. Opponents argue that taking race or gender into account in hiring or university admissions is discrimination pure and simple. Proponents counter that taking such characteristics into account redresses a legacy of discrimination; in effect, affirmative-action programs create a level playing field where certain groups historically have been denied the opportunity to compete. Legally, affirmative action has barely survived scrutiny, and is far from assured of a future under the Rehnquist Supreme Court. Yet over the last thirty-five years accumulating evidence demonstrates that sociologically and economically affirmative-action programs have played an indispensable role in the emergence of a new black middle class and in opening doors to women in the university, the professions, and the corporate world.

The two cases involving the University of Michigan challenge the legality of the university's undergraduate admissions policies as well as those of the law school. Both actions against the university are being funded by the Center for Individual Rights, a Washington, D.C.-based public-interest law firm determined to dismantle race-based preferences. The suits have been called the Alamo of affirmative action, and the most important race cases in a generation. In response, the University of Michigan has mounted a comprehensive legal defense of affirmative action, at least as the university practices it.

Trial testimony documents the fact that racial and ethnic diversity in the classroom improves the critical thinking skills and intellectual motivation of all students. Further, students who attend schools with diverse populations are more likely to later settle in heterogeneous communities and to be active in improving those communities. Businesses, once opponents, now say they have benefited from affirmative action in higher education: twenty Fortune 500 companies, including Microsoft, General Mills, Texaco, Intel, Lucent Technologies, and Eli Lilly, submitted a brief in support of Michigan's undergraduate admissions procedures. The brief asserts that diversity in higher education is so vital to the companies' efforts "to hire and maintain a diverse work force" and to employ people "who have been educated in a diverse environment" that the government has a compelling interest in allowing public colleges to continue using affirmative action in admissions. The university won its case on undergraduate admissions in federal district court this past December.

The *Gratz* and *Grutter* cases are noteworthy and controversial for other reasons, however, reasons that go beyond the classic justification for affirmative action as a remedy for historical and legal discrimination, most notably against African Americans. The new justifications invoked in the Michigan cases rest on the benefits that have come from affirmative action now defined as "diversity" broadly understood. The Supreme Court in *Baake* (1978) paved the way for this development when it ruled that colleges and universities could use race as *one* factor in

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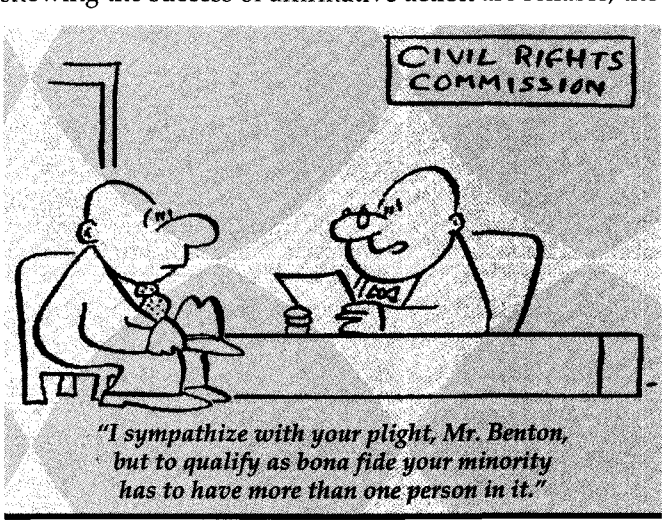
selecting students. Other factors have since emerged. Initially, the University of Michigan adopted affirmative action in an effort to provide an admission's boost to groups who had previously faced barriers in education and employment. Now the university defends its admissions policy to promote the benefits of diversity in the student body.

For some affirmative-action supporters, the evolution toward diversity is problematic. Won't the goal of providing opportunity to injured groups be obscured? If diversity is the good to be achieved, why not expand affirmative action to include Pakistanis, Norwegians, Arabs? Should recent immigrants benefit from affirmative-action programs originally designed to help black Americans? Certainly affirmative action opponents think the d-word opens a Pandora's box of racial and ethnic gerrymandering. The plaintiff in the pending suit against the University of Michigan Law School, for example, is an older, so-called "nontraditional" woman applicant. Might not she bring diversity benefits to the classroom too? Put on the waiting list at the law school, she argues that her scores and grades would have earned her admission had she been a member of a minority group.

One way for the university to address these questions is to voluntarily and periodically review its admissions policies in light of new demographic data, new sociological studies of affirmative action's impact, and the current debates on affirmative-action trends. This information is vital to the university's continual refinement of its goals in embracing affirmative action.

What is really at stake in these cases, however, is not the meaning of the term diversity, but the purpose of a university. In the plaintiffs' view, higher education is a means to individual advancement: therefore admissions must be strictly meritocratic (a notoriously amorphous standard itself). Scores and grades, they argue, are the only things that should count. The university sees its mission in a broader context. Yes, it must train scholars and contribute to the expansion of knowledge. But a public university also has social and moral obligations. Extending the benefits of education to all groups within society is one such obligation. If the studies showing the success of affirmative action are reliable, the extension of those benefits will not compromise the academic integrity of the institution, but will actually contribute to its improvement.



"I sympathize with your plight, Mr. Benton, but to qualify as bona fide your minority has to have more than one person in it."

ET CETERAS

Unmanned, yet again ■ Samson, you will recall, had a certain—and ultimately fatal—attraction to women of suspicious, namely Philistine, pedigree as well as a reputation for roughhousing. When he finally hooked up with Delilah and her sneaky shears, he had already spread destruction and chaos far and wide. There was that juvenile stunt of setting fire to the tails of 300 foxes. Then he picked up the jawbone of an ass and slew a thousand Philistines. Incorrigible. By the time Delilah weaseled the secret of his strength out of him, Samson seemed ripe for a rude comeuppance. Still, Samson was blessed, and even his weaknesses fit neatly into God's plan.

Not so fast, say the authors of a recent letter to the *Archives of General Psychiatry*. Far from blessed, Samson's acting out conforms to the classic pattern of "antisocial personality disorder," at least as that malady is defined by the American Psychiatric Association's official diagnostic manual. "It's pretty straightforward, pretty cut and dried," Dr. Eric Altschuler told the *New York Times* (February 20). Samson's storied behavior, it seems, conforms to a "pervasive pattern of disregard for, and violation of, the rights of others that begins in childhood or early adolescence and continues into adulthood."

Where would that leave wayward souls like Jacob and David?

The moral and religious question seems to be: Why weren't these difficult children medicated?

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NOTEBOOK

PUBLIC RELIGION

Not around here, says Ellen Willis

In a recent article in the *Nation* ("Freedom from Religion," February 19), Ellen Willis, director of the cultural journalism program at NYU, makes a candid, straightforward, and wrong-headed argument about church and state, religion and culture. Her immediate complaint is Bush II's establishment of a White House Office for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives and the bipartisan political support it has received. More appalling, in her view, is the burgeoning emergence (or reemergence) of religion in public life, which gives a basis of support to these faith-based initiatives. She insists not only that the wall separating church and state be impenetrable, but that religion be kept out of the public square, because "a genuinely democratic society requires a secular ethos."

It does not take much to elicit from me—and possibly many other Catholics and Christians—some sympathy for her plea for "freedom from religion" in opposing government funding for faith-based initiatives. Many will recognize in the Bush initiatives a potential danger to the public weal (is this yet another Republican effort to shrink government?), as well as a danger to religious institutions themselves. Her broader argument, however—religion out of public life—deserves critical scrutiny.

Begin with Willis's version of recent history. In the sixties, she argues, secularists and believers worked together for civil rights, against the war in Vietnam, and against poverty and social inequality. Their cooperation, she believes, was based on a shared understanding of the common good, rather than, as now, on efforts of religious liberals and leftists "to promote the power of religion itself or [take] issue with the secular left on specifically religious grounds."

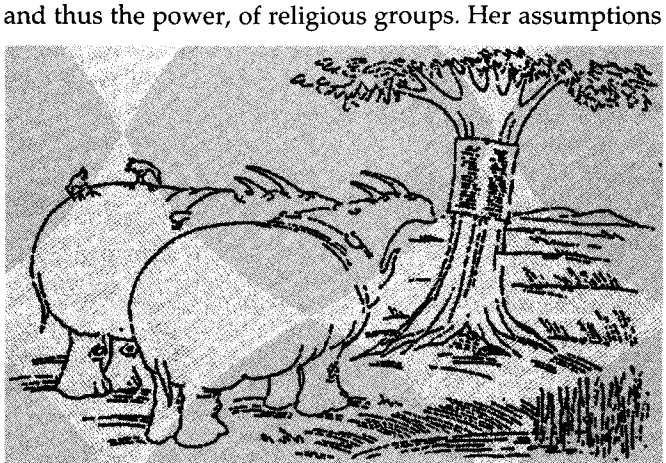
This is a plausible interpretation, but Willis underestimates the degree to which religious teachings and sentiments fueled those protest movements and provided both the troops and the mandate for social change. (How else do we understand the centrality of Martin Luther King and the black churches to the civil rights movement?) Then, she mistakes the depth and duration of cooperation: there being little initial disagreement between secularists and religious on goals—ending segregation, ending the war, and ending poverty—neither group had to examine the other's underlying assumptions very closely. That, of course, did not last beyond the violence of 1968. Yet Willis looks back on the sixties as a golden age of good behavior by the churches; both religious and secular groups lived under the regime of a shared separationist understanding of the First Amendment.

She does acknowledge, but underplays, the gap that emerged in 1973 with *Roe* v. *Wade*. (As I was reading her lament, I recalled a similar one in the seventies by peace activist Daniel Berrigan, S.J., regretting attacks from friends on the secular left because he and other Catholics opposed abortion.) Willis also skips over the secular and leftist politics that led Catholic ethnics and working-class voters to take their distance from liberalism and the Democratic Party in 1972. In fact, religious people, with or without allies, went right on acting by their own lights in the public square. (Who led the opposition to Ronald Reagan's wars in Central America?) Their lights were not always those of the secular left.

For Willis the real troubles began with the religious right's efforts to breach the wall of separation and its insistence that religious interests be heard in civic life. Today, she finds that her liberal and leftist allies have adapted an argument (first advanced on behalf of multiculturalists and sexual liberationists like herself) that in a democracy real tolerance and equality require that a place be made for every view. She cites the campaign speeches of Senator Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) and the writings of E.J. Dionne and Garry Wills as examples of liberals who are "supporting efforts to dilute the separation of church and state and increasing the power and influence of religion in American life." (Full disclosure: she also has reference to my work and that of Peter Steinfels.) These eminences can speak for themselves, but it strikes me that Willis mistakes the reach and the power of religion in American society. More surprising, she misconstrues the First Amendment.

First, religion is neither burgeoning nor reemerging; in some places it's diminishing. Churches, faith, religion (she uses the terms interchangeably) have been there all the time, doing what they usually do: worshiping, meditating, educating, healing, doing good works, encouraging social justice, and sometimes being out and out nutty. At times, these activities coincide with the projects of the secular left, *or right*, and coalitions form. The emergence or dissolution of such coalitions does not rest on attitudes toward the First Amendment, but usually on agreement/disagreement over moral principles or accord/discord on political goals and strategies.

Second, Willis overrates the cohesion and consistency, and thus the power, of religious groups. Her assumptions



"Hippos are in, orangutans are in, but pandas are out, natterjacks are out, wildebeest and sea eagles are in, dugong are in, bison are out, polar bear..."

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about religion/faith/churches, in fact, are the mirror image of the religious right's views of the secular left—powerful conspiracies that are winning in a life-and-death struggle for domination of U.S. society. Seriously practicing Christians, Jews, Muslims, or Buddhists know that the juggernaut of religion is a fantasy created by secularists. Conversely, secularists, like Willis, feel vulnerable precisely because they know secularism is no juggernaut either. Curiously enough for a lefty, Willis never looks at the real juggernaut, the economic forces that are shaping—often with an invisible hand—the culture and politics against which liberals, secularists, and religious often struggle in vain. Where is Karl Marx when we really need him?

Third, and here I think we arrive at the neuralgic issue: Willis sees programs of sexual liberation—abortion, divorce, same-sex marriage, nonmarital sex and childbearing—as the fundamental disagreement between secularists and religious. These are the issues that bring religion forcefully into the public square as cultural and political critic. And with the culture's gradual obliteration of the divide between public and private, these are precisely the issues that Willis wants removed from the purview of religious tutelage.

She writes: "One need not trivialize the fears of religious parents [about these issues] to recognize that this is at bottom a complaint against democracy itself." Is that so? Is this a quarrel about democracy or about the definition of democracy, about whose ideas count and whose don't? Which ideas are allowed voice in the public square and which are forbidden? "Religious" ideas about divorce, abortion, same-sex marriage, and single parenthood are forbidden speech because they are religious, while "secular" ideas about them are permitted speech. Secular ideas enjoy their First Amendment rights, the freedom of speech and conscience, while religious ideas are barred because of the nonestablishment clause. Heads I win, tails you lose.

An astute religious advocate may decide to shape his or her objections to abortion, teenage pregnancy, same-sex marriage, etc., in philosophical, sociological, or political rather than scriptural or doctrinal language. But are they obliged to do so? As long as religious advocates are willing to take the flak, why should they be ruled out of public debate? Neither can they expect, as Willis insists, privileged treatment. On the other hand, if religious advocates can convince others that divorce is not good for children or that teenage motherhood is bad for mothers and children, so much the better for the whole society, secularists included.

Willis sums up: "If believers feel that their faith is trivialized and their true selves compromised by a society that will not give religious imperatives special weight, their problem is not that secularists are antidemocratic but that democracy is antiabsolutist." Her essay, however, suggests quite the opposite. For Willis, there is one absolute for democracy: religion cannot be part of the public conversation. Now, that is antidemocratic. MARGARET O'BRIEN STEINFELS

OF SEVERAL MINDS

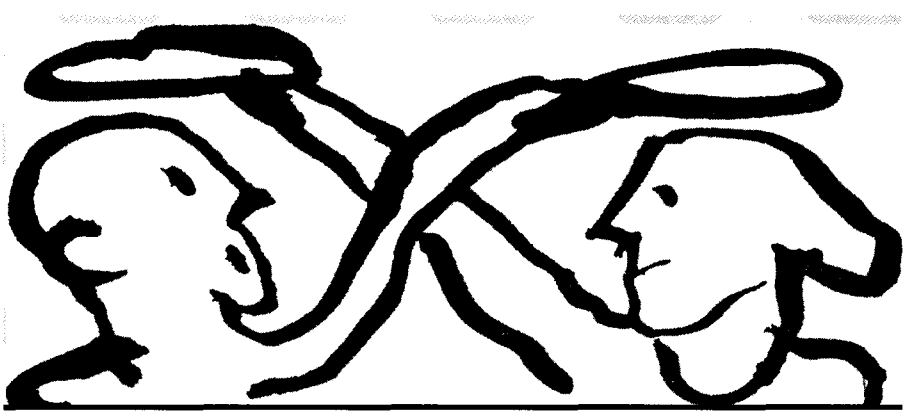
SIDNEY CALLAHAN

THE CALL TO HOLINESS

Planned & unplanned

In his apostolic letter *Novo millennio ineunte*, initiating the new millennium, Pope John Paul II asks: "Can holiness ever be planned?" Well might he ask—given the complexity of the idea of holiness. John Paul II, however, rarely asks questions without his reply at the ready. Yes, he answers, there exists a "genuine 'training in holiness' adapted to people's needs." God offers the gift of holiness to all, but "the gift in turn becomes a task which must shape the whole of Christian life." Today, the pastoral priority of every Catholic parish should be to prepare its members to respond to the Second Vatican Council's "universal call to holiness." A universal education in the art of prayer must be initiated, centered on all the different forms of public and private prayer such as eucharistic prayer, liturgical prayer of the hours, contemplative prayer, and personal conversational communion with Jesus as friend.

Overburdened pastors coping with the multiple activities of a busy parish may quail before this papal insistence that they reclaim the church's holy mystery and offer a training in holiness. As one good pastor puts it, his parish has to make an effort just "to reach out, to invite, to encourage people to the active practice of their faith at the most elementary level." Most registered Catholics aren't even coming to Mass every Sunday. The parish is "a diverse complex



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reality" forced to provide "something for everybody." The implicit message here is that mysticism for the masses is hopeless.

In such a dialogue I think the pope makes the better case. Yes, parishes do well to act as "mediating institutions" (the buzz word in political analysis used to praise voluntary associations that stand between the individual and the state). Churches do build community bonds that strengthen civil society. And those parishes which are true to Catholic social teaching will serve the needy (with or without President George W. Bush's imprimatur), while they work for structural reforms. The pope accepts all this and says that working for social justice embodies the church's "commitment to history," and demonstrates our "love for our brothers and sisters." His point is that growth in holiness and prayer will energize love of neighbor and enkindle the commitment to social justice. I agree. Furthering the transcendent spiritual life of a parish is, as Mary rather than Martha would understand, to choose the better part. For that matter, holiness always attracts crowds. Heart speaks to heart.

How many times have I heard cradle Catholics say that they left the church because they never understood that their religion was more than a formal ritual, or dutiful conformity to rules? The inner spiritual dimension of the faith was not apparent to them, only the judgments and guilt that produced the fear that cast out love. These sad testimonies always begin with the words, "I had twelve years of Catholic education, but..." Such misunderstandings fuel the "I am a recovering Catholic" movement. As a convert, I resist these stories, but over the years I've had to admit that abuses do happen.

When Catholics return to the faith, they do so because they discover the power of the Holy Spirit to heal and help them live good and happy lives. I disagree with those theological authorities (often Protestant) who proclaim that it is a deep-seated misunderstanding of religion "to presume that the purpose of religion is to produce happiness. The primary function of religion is not to generate happiness but to construct meaning" (see, Tyron Inbody, *The Transforming God* [Westminster John Knox]). No, dear friend, it is a far greater misunderstanding to think that a coherent belief system is enough. The pope is far truer to the gospel when he says that prayer and worship lead to "ineffable joy." As the book of Nehemiah (8:10) says: "rejoicing in the Lord must be your strength." Gospel joy leads to sacrificial love in action, but social action and meaningful constructs, *sans* prayer, don't lead to the abundant life.

Since "paths to holiness are personal," as the pope writes, holiness comes in many forms. Here I wish John Paul II had probed more deeply into the meaning of holiness for lay persons engaged in the world. Holiness will always consist of intense love of God and neighbor, but the specifics can present problems. Holiness is also wholeness, or an integration of all that I am—and I am many things. As a wife, mother, grandmother, writer, and lecturer, my days consist of many activities that require my full focused attention. I cannot be concentrating on reciting lauds and compline at church, or on private prayers at home, and at the same time fully attend to my granddaughter's emotional needs—or talk over some thorny bioethical question with my husband. Familial and intellectual activities conflict (the working grandmother problem), and both require a loss of self-consciousness in service of the other. (Just as sex does, I might add for the benefit of celibates and the cloistered.) The holiness quest of a person in the world has to be grounded in the realization that working well and loving well require engrossed states of emotional and mental concentration.

I tentatively conclude that prayer can be offered before and after intense, engaged activities, but not during. I would love to hear a sermon helping me become whole and holy at every level of personal consciousness, with or without self-awareness. I'm obviously seeking a spirituality that covers the out-of-control, unexamined passionate part of life. Can, for instance, holiness also be unplanned? □

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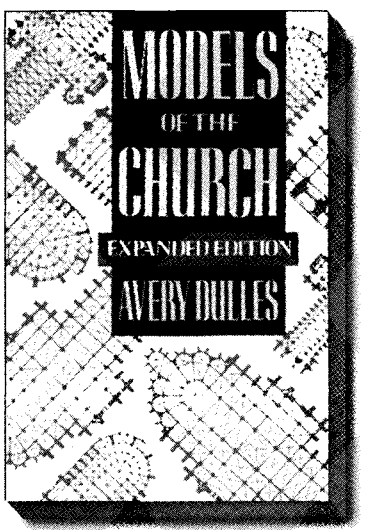

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JOHN GARVEY

THE LESSONS OF COMPLEXITY

On reading E. O. Wilson & Wendell Berry

A recent *New York Times Magazine* article (February 4) told the chilling tale of a couple who are trying to clone their dead child. They are being assisted by a UFO cult, one led by a former racecar driver named Raël, who claims to have learned much from space aliens. The chemist who is directing the cloning project for the Raëlians says that a number of young women are willing to serve as surrogate mothers; one is the woman's own daughter. The dead child's parents know, says the chemist, that "this baby will have no memory of the ten months they had been living together. They know the baby will not be exactly the same as the first one. But they are still working to get him back. They think this baby should be alive." (See this, and more strange stuff, in Margaret Talbot's article, "A Desire to Duplicate.")

This struck me as both sad—in the unlikely chance of a successful cloning, they will not get "him" back—and profoundly superstitious. Superstition, after all, is more about control and the illusion of control than it is about magic.

By a wonderful coincidence, a fine book came my way at the same time this article did. It is Wendell Berry's long essay, *Life Is a Miracle: An Essay against Modern Superstition* (Counterpoint). Berry spends a good deal of the book arguing with Edward O. Wilson's proposed reconciliation of science, religion, and the arts, which Wilson put forward in *Consilience* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1998). Berry's point is that religion and the arts are, in Wilson's scheme, subsumed under a scientistic, reductionist point of view, one which is finally as much a matter of faith and a priori thinking as any religion ever was. Berry speaks of the Kentucky farm he has worked for thirty-seven years, and shows that its mystery cannot be exhausted by reductive language. "To know that I am 'a white male American human,' that a red bird with black wings is 'a scarlet tanager,' that this is 'a riparian plant community'—all that is helpful to a necessary kind of thought. But when I try to make my language more particular, I see that the life of this place is always emerging beyond expectation or prediction or typicality, that it is unique, given to the world minute by minute, only once, never to be repeated. And then is when I see that this life is a miracle, absolutely worth having, absolutely worth saving....Perhaps we should wish that after the processes of reduction, scientists would return, not to the processes of synthesis and integration, but to the world of our creatureliness and affection, our joy and grief, that precedes and (so far) survives all of our processes."

Berry argues that a real dialogue among science, art, and religion would exhibit "a just complexity," which rules out the narrowness of Wilson's reductionism. Science is necessarily about generalization and exhaustive explanation; Berry asks, "Is knowledge by definition explainable, or is there such a thing as unexplainable knowledge?" Arguing that there is such a thing, Berry provides examples from *King Lear*, a biography of Robert E. Lee, and the Old Testament. He offers Job's "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though...worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God." Wilson would consider this "a 'beneficent' falsehood, supported by no 'objective evidence' or 'statistical proofs.'...People follow religion, he says, because it is 'easier' than empiricism, the lab evidently being harder to bear than the cross....Suppose, granting the hopelessness of empirical proof, that you took Job's statement of faith as seriously as Mr. Wilson wishes you to take empiricism; how, then, could you explain it to Mr. Wilson? It seems to me that you would have to concede—and here empirical evidence is available—that it could not be done."

The arts—and the Incarnation itself—are incapable of the generalization and reductionism that a merely scientific point of view imposes. Berry is not at all against science; it is a necessary but limited and limiting way to examine aspects of the world. What he opposes is the claim that science can satisfactorily explain everything that matters most to us. He demonstrates his points well, sometimes devastatingly.

But this book is finally much more than an argument with Wilson. Berry has wise and powerfully moving things to say about ethics, morality, religion, and the arts. The title might lead people to dismiss *Life Is a Miracle* as one of those dreadful inspirational books. It is inspirational, like *Lear*, like Job. Toward the beginning of the book, after making a wonderful use of the dialogue between Gloucester and Edgar in *King Lear*, Berry writes something that shines through on every page: "To treat life as less than a miracle is to give up on it." □

LENTEN SUNDAY VESPERS

4:00 P.M. PREACHERS

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Rev. Dr. James A. Forbes Jr.
Senior Minister, The Riverside Church

March 11
Canon Robert Wright
The Cathedral of St. John the Divine

March 18
Margaret O'Brien Steinfels
Editor, Commonweal

March 25
Rev. Barbara Lundblad
Professor, Union Theological Seminary

April 1
Anne Nelson
Director, The International Program, Columbia Graduate School of Journalism

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Willard Francis Jabusch

A PAPAL VISIT TO RUSSIA

Where is Alexei II's invite?

Most Catholics, I suspect, are annoyed if not dismayed at the unwelcoming and unecumenical attitude of Alexei II, Patriarch of All Russia. Pope John Paul II would like to add Russia to the long list of countries he has visited. He has already been invited by Russian President Vladimir Putin, and only awaits word from the patriarch before flying to Moscow. (The patriarch is said to be ailing.) Quite apart from the fact that there are about five hundred thousand Roman Catholics in Russia, the pope knows that his visit would have enormous symbolic importance for the whole Christian world.

But Alexei II shows little interest in a papal visit to "Holy Russia." Why? In an interview with the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera*, Alexei II has spoken of the "persecution of Orthodox Christians by Greek Catholics in western Ukraine, and the work of proselytism carried out by Catholic church structures among the traditionally Orthodox population of the canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox church."

In Communist times, Catholic clergy and laity who did not convert to Orthodoxy were imprisoned in labor camps and often murdered. The property of Ukrainian Greek Catholics was confiscated and given to the Orthodox. Now the Catholics would like to have their churches and other property in the western Ukraine returned. Regrettably, there has been some anger and recrimination on the part of some Catholics. But it is hyperbole to speak of "persecution."

Overzealous proselytizing is a real concern, but after seventy-four years of atheism, it is not surprising that many have no religious allegiance. In the new Russia, with its relative freedom of religion, many, especially the young, have questions about their own Orthodox roots. Some believe that the biography of Alexei himself—his rapid rise from a simple Estonian monk to official representative of the USSR at foreign conferences, to metropolitan of Leningrad, and finally to patriarch—suggests his collaboration with the former Soviet state. It makes sense, therefore, that some Russians find themselves drawn to other religions. In Latin America, Roman Catholics are not very happy about the growth of Evangelical sects, but it is the price to be paid for religious freedom. Is Alexei willing to pay a similar price for this freedom in Russia?

Yet, it is to the Orthodox church that many Russians return. In ten short years, several historic monasteries and convents have been restored to the Orthodox church and have welcomed hundreds of young novices. Valaam, on a beautiful island in Lake Ladoga near the Finnish border, is once again home to both monks and hermits. The "Orthodox Vatican" and holiest of all monasteries is Sergiyev Posad, about forty miles outside Moscow. During Soviet days, it was renamed Zagorsk, after a Communist hero. Now it is once again named after Saint Sergius, the most revered of Russian mystics. Today, pilgrims travel to Sergiyev Posad to venerate the saint's relics, and 300 seminarians study theology there.

True, some churches in Russia are still being used as restaurants, garages, or gyms, but when visiting there for several weeks last August, I saw that many had been restored to liturgical use. Currently, new icons are being installed, frescos are being painted, domes have been regilded in magnificent gold leaf, and choirs have relearned the wonderful Slavonic church music—necessary because every liturgy is sung and there are no organs, pianos, or guitars. Most important, today the churches are crowded! Many twenty-somethings I observed in the congregations seemed extraordinarily devout. They stood—for there are no pews or kneelers—and made the deep bows and innumerable signs of the cross as they followed the lengthy liturgies with a quiet intensity. They would have been about ten years old when the Soviet state collapsed. Pastors in Western Europe and North America can only envy such numbers and devotion. With this religious revival, the astonishing number of priestly and monastic vocations, and the restored magnificence of the Russian churches, Patriarch Alexei II may think he has no need of a visit from the bishop of Rome. He already has a church that is growing with the devotion of many young people, one that represents a highly visible part of every city and village. Would a visit from the pope in any way add to Alexei's prestige, or would it rather only confuse and influence his people in undesirable ways? Hence, his evident coolness.

But there is another reason, even less evident to Westerners: the heavy hand of history. The great hero of ancient Russia is Saint Prince Alexander Nevsky (1220–63), the man who saved Russia from the invading Teutonic Knights who promised to make it Roman Catholic. Nevsky is a sort of George Washington for the Russians, made a saint because he saved the country for the Orthodox religion. Every Russian child learns the story. And there is yet more that is seldom mentioned in Western history books. In the seventeenth century, Polish and Lithuanian armies invaded Russia. They brought with them Jesuit missionaries to convert the people to Catholicism. At the famous monastery of Optina Pustin, several hours from Moscow in the Russian countryside, I winced when a young Russian guide described how the Polish troops massacred the monks and then immolated the women and children who had taken refuge in the village church. As they listen to such horror stories, it is hardly a wonder that many Russians take "Roman Catholic" to mean "alien" or indeed "enemy." As in Ireland or Bosnia, a dash of historical amnesia might be helpful in tempering ancient hostilities. But in the meantime, it is unlikely that a Polish pope will be a welcome guest in Moscow. □

The Reverend Willard Francis Jabusch *is the director of Calvert House, the Catholic Student Center at the University of Chicago.*

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I WAS A TEENAGE CONSERVATIVE

The dead end of politics & the possibilities of art

Gregory Wolfe

I want to relate my work as the editor of a quarterly journal of literature and the arts to the larger patterns of Catholic civic engagement in America today. The more I think about this, the more convinced I become that the best way to address it is to attempt something of a self-portrait, to describe both the evolution of my ideas and some of the reasons for my conversion to the Catholic church.

I was born with the conservative intellectual movement's silver spoon in my mouth. As early as the 1950s my father was at the center of the emerging conservative intellectual movement. He worked for a small foundation in a suburb of New York that promoted the virtues of the free market. Bill Buckley came there to discuss the idea of starting up a magazine to be called *National Review*.

By the time I got to college age it was only natural that I would go to the academic mecca of conservatism in America, Hillsdale College in Michigan. In the late 1970s two great scholars taught there, Russell Kirk and Gerhart Niemeyer. Nearly fifty years after its publication, Kirk's *The Conservative Mind* (1953) remains a brilliant, graceful synthesis of European and American traditionalist ideas from Edmund Burke to T.S. Eliot. Though the movement Kirk helped to launch would degenerate into a large, fractious coalition dominated by Washington-based think tanks, his own thought manifests an amplitude of mind and heart that cannot be reduced to a manifesto. Niemeyer, an émigré political philosopher who had escaped from Nazi Germany, spent his life trying to understand the emergence of modern ideologies. Commuting to Hillsdale from Notre Dame, where he taught for most of his career, Niemeyer would not only guide his students through the philosophies of Plato, Augustine, Rousseau, and Marx, but also through the literary visions of Dostoevsky, Musil, Trilling, and Solzhenitsyn.

After a one-semester flirtation with libertarianism, I quickly apprenticed myself to Kirk and Niemeyer. They established their conservative visions on a rich synthesis of literature, history, philosophy, and theology. In short, they espoused a form of Christian humanism that I found deeply moving. By comparison, the conservative political and economic nostrums touted by others at Hillsdale seemed brittle and thin. They were piping voices compared to the rumbling organ chords of Dante and Aristotle, Aquinas and Newman, whom I was reading with Kirk and Niemeyer.

Even with the help of these two great mentors, I still experienced cognitive dissonance in a variety of forms. This was particularly true when it came to literature and the arts, which I had discovered to be my true passions. In my youthful ardor, I embraced the notion, espoused by many conservatives, that "modernity" was a monolithic, and very bad, thing. In the arts this entailed a repudiation of Modern Art (the words were always capitalized). It was well known that Modern Art was all about chaos and fragmentation, unfettered sexuality, the occult, and so on. It lacked order; it lacked unity; it lacked nobility. So I thought, "I'm a young culture warrior; my mission is to go off and slay the beast of modernity."

I began reading T.S. Eliot with Russell Kirk, and the cognitive dissonances became more pronounced. I gravitated toward Eliot's conservatism, which he once expressed by declaring himself "a royalist, an Anglo-Catholic, and a classicist." This was a mantra ready-made for me. But the more I read his poetry, the more I found a disparity between his supposed classicism and the messy, fragmented, subjective reality of his poetic language. I learned that Eliot came to regret that profession of his allegiances, and since Eliot was employing the fragmented modernist style that I had believed was part of the problem, further revisions in my thinking were necessary. To paraphrase *Hamlet*, I gradually saw that what great art does is to hold a mirror up to nature, to reveal the "very age and body of the time his form and pressure." Eliot was seeking to embrace ancient truths, but he did so in the artistic forms of his day. Rather than impose a false classical order over his inner disorder, Eliot worked through his own chaos, shoring up fragments against his ruin.

As I pursued the implications of this line of thought, I looked around to see whether my fellow conservatives were engaging the culture of their own time. I found that they were deeply alienated from the world around them—that they had, in essence, despaired of conserving any cultural legacy. Whether consciously or not, they believed that Western civilization had died at some point in the past (some favored 1300, others 1832 or 1914). With the example of Eliot

Gregory Wolfe *is the editor of* Image: A Journal of the Arts and Religion *and writer in residence at Seattle Pacific University. His latest book, co-authored with his wife Suzanne, is* Circle of Grace: Praying with—and for—Your Children *(Ballantine).* *This essay is adapted from a talk given for "American Catholics in the Public Square," a project funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts.*

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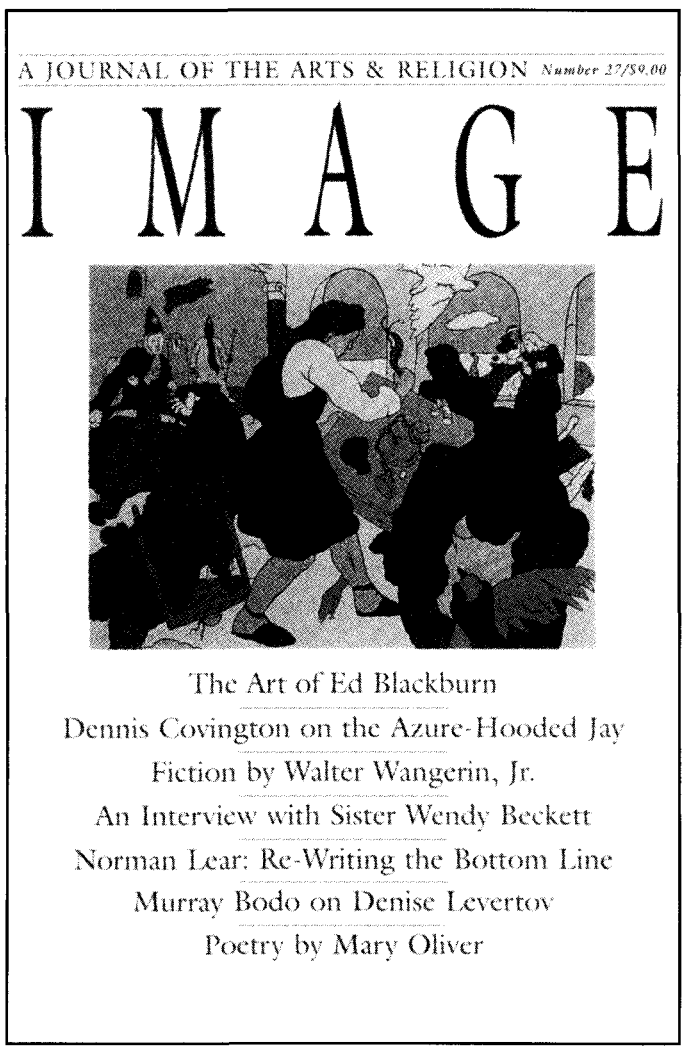
before me, I couldn't accept such a position. I began trying to think my way out of it. I also noticed that with despair came rage, which explained why conservatives were always furious: they had no tradition left to conserve. The more I studied literature and the arts, the more I realized that they show us that the world is far more ambiguous than we think. It became more and more difficult for me to reconcile this awareness of ambiguity and complexity with the ideological fervor of the community in which I lived.

I lost the last of my enthusiasm for conservatism soon after graduating from Hillsdale, when I was at *National Review* in the summer and fall of 1980 during the final run-up to Ronald Reagan's election. For a time after the election I was caught up in the euphoria, but I was already lost to the conservative movement. A few days after the election, the phones at *NR* and other conservative organizations began ringing off the hook as people jockeyed for positions in the new administration, including jobs in departments these stalwarts had resolutely pledged to abolish. My euphoria evaporated and was replaced by something closer to moral revulsion.

I went off to Oxford University to study literature and theology. Throughout the evolution of my ideas about politics and culture, I had also been on a spiritual journey. Having moved through several Protestant denominations in my undergraduate years, I had arrived at the threshold of the Catholic church. Catholicism appealed to me because it offered a corrective vision to the individualism, triumphalism, and politicization of the conservative movement. I was drawn by many facets of Catholicism, including its communitarian ethos and sacramental vision. But what ultimately drew me to the church was another facet, one about which too little is spoken. It's what the great Basque philosopher Miguel de Unamuno called "the tragic sense of life." At the center of this sensibility is a profound awareness of the ambiguities and divisions within the human heart, along with a stress on the importance of suffering and contemplation. I came to understand why Catholics venerate the crucifix, not the empty cross, why they are haunted by the words to Mary that "a sword shall pierce your own soul also." There have been times when critics have confused the tragic sense with mere fatalism, but I suspect that is because Americans still suffer from the illusion that they can escape tragedy and remake themselves in the process. The truth, as I came to see it, is that the tragic sense of life is the ultimate antidote to religious arrogance and sentimentality, as well as to the ideological triumphalisms of the Right and Left.

During my two years in Oxford, I read the leading novelists of what has loosely been called the Catholic Literary Revival: Georges Bernanos and François Mauriac, Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh, Walker Percy and Flannery O'Connor. For all their differences of personality, literary style, and politics, every one of these writers explored the tragic dimension of the Catholic worldview. Like T.S. Eliot, these novelists synthesized modern concerns—from existentialism to scientism—with the truths of the ancient faith. Far from causing them to write safe, didactic tales, their Catholicism encouraged them to render in dramatic form the paradoxes of faith for an increasingly secular audience. Their characters—including the country priest and the whisky priest, Charles Ryder and Hazel Motes—learned the painful lesson that happiness and blessedness are not the same thing, that the church calls us to make a choice "costing not less than everything" (Eliot). Where some saw only gloomy, depressing stories, I found liberation. At the end of my time in Oxford, I was received into the church.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A few years later I found a way to live out the best part of my conservative education and address the need for a deeper engagement between religious faith and contemporary culture. In 1989 I launched a quarterly journal of literature and the arts called *Image*, whose purpose is to feature original creative work that grapples with the Judeo-Christian tradition. The journal is a two-edged sword: a challenge both to the secular critics convinced that religion can no longer inform great art and to those believers who, like my old conservative comrades, are convinced that the Western tradition is dead and buried.

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Image is also a response to the hyper-politicization of our social order, a process that has been most visible in the so-called culture wars and the bitter dispute over last fall's presidential election. There is some debate about just how deep the divisions of the culture wars go, but I think it's fair to say that, at the level of public discourse, we have witnessed a slide into increasingly shrill, utopian ideological rhetoric on both sides of the aisle. Politics may be a noble calling, but it is always in danger of becoming an end in itself. Political struggles take place over issues that are defined by the underlying culture. And culture, in turn, is nourished by art and religion. With all respect to my elders and betters, I think my generation, which grew up after the '60s, is less interested in manning the ideological battlements and more interested in cultivating the spiritual and imaginative sources of our common life.

Catholics are playing a central role in a revival of art that grapples with faith. Think of writers like Oscar Hijuelos, Alice McDermott, Ron Hansen, Annie Dillard, Richard Rodriguez, David Plante, Tobias Wolff, Jon Hassler, and poets such as Dana Gioia, Paul Mariani, Brigit Pegeen Kelly, and the late Denise Levertov. I take it as a healthy sign that there is no school of Catholic writers, that the group I've just listed is marked by a tremendous diversity of styles and sensibilities. We don't have figures today like Flannery O'Connor and Walker Percy who might be capitalized by the critics as Catholic Authors. While we should mourn that to some extent—O'Connor and Percy were profoundly Catholic writers whose works manifested philosophical depth and prophetic wisdom—there are plenty of reasons to celebrate the fact that fewer writers are being pigeon-holed by their denominational allegiances.

Contemporary Catholic writers are in some ways less ambitious than their predecessors earlier in the twentieth century. Today's Catholic writers are describing more intimate and familiar worlds. Instead of O'Connor's belief in the need to shout for a hard-of-hearing secular audience, we are more likely to find writers these days choosing to whisper. Alice McDermott's *Charming Billy* and Oscar Hijuelos's *Mr. Ives' Christmas* are both portraits of sanctity and suffering, but their take on the "tragic sense of life" is quiet and unassuming when contrasted with the stark, existential dramas of the whisky and country priests. It goes without saying that many contemporary Catholic writers have troubled or anguished relationships with the church. The metaphor of Jacob wrestling the angel is frequently invoked these days. But this still represents a significant shift: there's less anger, less irony, and less willingness to turn one's back on the church in the leading Catholic writers today than was the case twenty years ago. If these authors are beset by doubts, they are also less likely to condemn the institutional church out of hand.

If I've had a recurring frustration over the years, it's been the difficulty of getting people to listen to good news. The relentless negativism of the culture wars and the suspicion of imagination that runs deep in our American religious tradition remain potent forces. Despite the aesthetic richness of our tradition, American Catholics are not exempt from these forces. A great deal of education is needed. Seminaries should offer more courses in literature and the arts. The bishops could use a refresher course or two: their responses to controversial works of art like Martin Scorsese's film *The Last Temptation of Christ*, for example, have been inept. Then there is the waste that comes with political posturing and name-calling. Conservatives routinely deride one of the most cultured and artistically sensitive Catholic bishops, Archbishop Rembert Weakland. Liberals dance around the fact that the giants of twentieth-century Catholic aesthetics, including Jacques Maritain, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Romano Guardini, were not self-styled dissenters from church teaching and authority.

At a time when two of our most precious forms of communication—political discourse and reason itself—have been compromised by the divisiveness of ideology, art is one of the few things that can still bind us together. It should be no surprise that beauty—long vilified as hopelessly bourgeois or subjective by modernists and postmodernists alike—is making a comeback. From scholarly books like Elaine Scarry's *On Beauty and Being Just* (Princeton University Press) to such films as *American Beauty*, it is clear that our culture is longing for the liberating and restorative power of creative intuition (to use a phrase of Maritain's). In her book, Scarry laments the loss of a transcendent ground for beauty in modern thought. "If the metaphysical realm has vanished, one may feel bereft not only because of the giant deficit left by that vacant realm but because the girl, the bird, the vase, the book now seem unable in their solitude to justify or account for the weight of their own beauty. If each calls out for attention that has no destination beyond itself, each seems more self-centered, too fragile to support the gravity of our immense regard." Place this alongside this thought from von Balthasar: "Our situation today shows that beauty demands for itself at least as much courage and decision as do truth and goodness, and she will not allow herself to be separated and banned from her two sisters without taking them along with herself in an act of mysterious vengeance. We can be sure that whoever sneers at her name as if she were the ornament of a bourgeois past...can no longer pray and soon will no longer be able to love."

Forbidding as these two quotations may appear at first, I find them liberating. The problem that von Balthasar sets out—the danger of a social order in which truth and goodness are stressed at the expense of beauty—speaks directly to my own struggle to find an integrated vision in a polarized time. Taken together, these two statements suggest not only the enormous challenges facing our politicized society but also the possibility of a theological aesthetic that can heal and unite. The communitarian, sacramental, and tragic dimensions of the Catholic tradition grew out of a faith attuned to beauty. The effort to renew this tradition through literature and the arts shapes my own form of Catholic civic engagement. □

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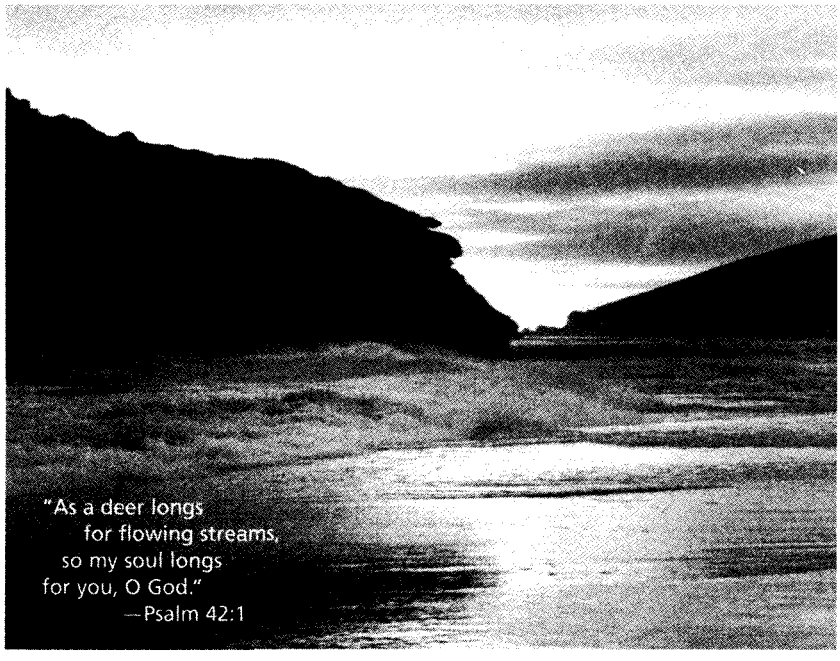

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VERSION ONE

A continuum in the great tradition

James Hitchcock

Are rival interpretations of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Catholic history vying for our attention and making competing claims to be the true history? In "Continuing the Conversation" (September 8, 2000), Robert Egan asked the question and called for a public discussion of the two interpretations that have emerged from antagonistic understandings of Vatican II and the upheavals that followed.

To summarize Egan's main points: In version one, Vatican II, meant to complete the work of Vatican I, was distorted by various secular and cultural ideologies. The papacy of John Paul II is seen to have reestablished balance in the church and to have offered an alternative to the easy acceptance of modernity. In contrast, version two rests on a more positive attitude toward modernity and liberalism. In this view, Vatican II was a dramatic turning point in which the church was tested and renewed by its encounter with the modern world. The papacy of John Paul II is understood as an interruption and even a disruption in the practice of the dialogue, engagement, and collegiality called for by Vatican II.

Have two versions of post-Vatican II history emerged? Are they competing for legitimacy in our understanding of Catholicism? Commonweal *put the questions independently to two historians, James Hitchcock and John W. O'Malley. Their replies follow.*

THE EDITORS

The appropriate stance which the church should take toward modernity is, of course, dependent on how modernity itself is understood, an understanding rendered immeasurably more difficult by the announced arrival of "postmodernity."

The difficulty of defining modernity is already present in the difficulty of deciding exactly when and why it began, with answers ranging from medieval nominalism and Renaissance humanism, through Protestantism, the New Science, and the Enlightenment, to industrial capitalism, democracy, and the artistic avant-garde. If modernity is understood as merely the sum total of everything that has happened in Western civilization since the High Middle Ages, it risks becoming a meaningless concept.

Some of these elements were embraced, or at least tolerated, by the church from the beginning. Nominalism was an accepted theological school. The papacy itself patronized Renaissance humanism. The Galileo case notwithstanding, the church has never been antiscience, even less antitechnology, and a persuasive case has been made that in some ways Western science was itself made possible by the Christian view of creation and of the fundamental order of the universe.

In other movements—Protestantism, the Enlightenment, Marxism—modernity chose to define itself precisely in opposition to Catholicism, so that it is impossible to see how any kind of rapprochement could have been effected at the time. With centuries of hindsight, and with the leisure of academic detachment, it may now seem possible to transcend past hostilities and arrive at common ground. But such a judgment is historically naive if it treats these great historical eruptions merely as abstract ideas, ignoring the cauldrons in which they were brewed.

Ironically, while the church is routinely condemned as the perennial enemy of change, in recent times its historical openness to technology has been criticized as the root of Western maltreatment of nature. But if there is anything which is unquestionably modern, it is pervasive technology, and, to the extent that the environmentalists' criticisms are justified, they serve as warnings to the church precisely not to accommodate itself to what seems progressive in each new age. (In the fourth century it was "modern" for the church to embrace the Roman Empire.)

Pius IX's "Syllabus of Errors" is, of course, the prime exhibit of the church's allegedly narrow-minded and intransigent reaction to essentially benign currents of modern culture. But all except a few of the pronouncements in that document are defensible in the light of liberalism as the church then experienced it. Pius IX saw liberalism not as a humane abstract idea but as a movement which proclaimed liberty and in practice threatened the church's very right to exist, just as the Enlightenment had proclaimed freedom and tolerance but helped prepare the way for the French Reign of Terror.

Doctrinal issues aside, what the solemn definition of papal infallibility achieved, among other things, was a declaration of the church's independence from all secular authority, and a papacy now equipped to fight for that independence in an often hostile social and political environment. In the context of the time, movements which favored decentralized ecclesiastical authority, like Gallicanism, were dangerous even to those who espoused them, since a strong papacy was necessary to provide local churches with the resources to resist

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James Hitchcock *is professor of history at Saint Louis University.*

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VERSION TWO

A break from the past

John W. O'Malley

I teach a course titled "Two Great Councils: Trent and Vatican II." In it I pit the two councils against one another because I believe, with Aristotle, that it's basically through the discernment of likenesses and differences that we learn. Between Trent and Vatican II there are many likenesses, many differences. Although I could provide a long list, I will here limit myself to one of each. I hope thus to establish a framework for assessing the significance of Vatican II for the church today.

The two councils are alike in that they are extremely wordy. In the Alberigo/Tanner collection of the documents from the twenty-one councils recognized as ecumenical by the Catholic church, two councils—Trent and Vatican II—take up about one-third of the space. This simple bit of information suggests to me as a historian that the documents are trying to say something more than business as usual. Historians agree that Trent is one of the most significant councils in the history of the church and, indeed, initiated what is often called "the Tridentine era" of Catholicism that lasted for a long, long time.

The documents of Vatican II are twice as long as Trent's. They were produced by an apparatus of bishops and theologians incomparably more elaborate and sophisticated than those that produced Trent's documentation, and they venture into areas never before touched upon by any council. Vatican II made front-page news for four years, arousing in people from almost every walk of life and every religious background astonishment, delight, despair, and incredulity. Bishops who participated spoke of "the end of the Counter-Reformation," even more boldly of "the end of the Constantinian era," and more boldly still of "a new Pentecost." Maybe this was a passing rapture, or maybe, especially given the extraordinary length of its documents, the council intended to change things more radically than simply turning the priest around at Mass to face the people, even more radically than did Trent. If so, what precisely was the change? Can it be put in a word or two?

Before trying to answer those questions, let me point out a difference between Trent and Vatican II. Although both were extraordinarily verbose—that is, both had a lot to say—they were verbose in different ways. While exhortation and exposition were surely not absent from Trent, its more significant documents were framed in prescriptive language. They were meant to effect closure. Trent "defined" certain doctrines, which means it closed discussion. In its reform decrees it did the same thing analogously by prescribing certain behavior, especially for bishops and priests, and by threatening punishment for failure to comply: Make Them Behave. The documents of Trent, then, have a closed, top-down, and prescriptive style, which by and large is the style employed by every other ecumenical council—except Vatican II.

The style of Vatican II is different: this is the clue indicating the significance of the council. As is always said of it, it defined nothing. Its language, while theologically correct, tends to be (or at least often sounds) nontechnical. It legislated little, and, even when it did, it did not prescribe punishment for offenders. To accomplish the goals of the council, the documents appeal to the good will of those to whom they are directed and therefore strive to motivate them to

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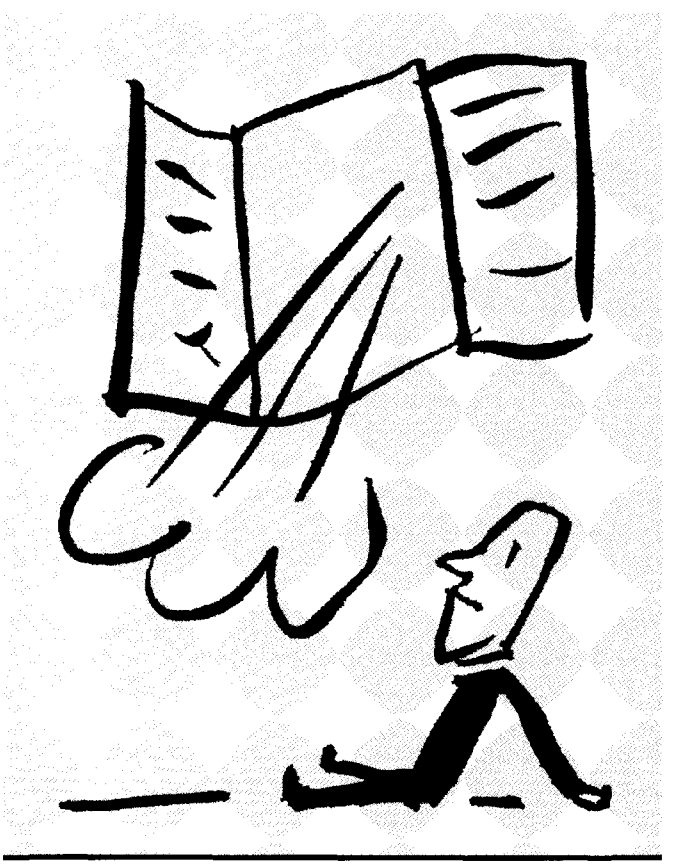

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(Continued from page 16)

secular encroachments on their liberties. (If religion provides history's most notorious examples of a hypocritical gulf between proclamations of love and practices of hate, "progressive" political movements rank second only because they do not have nearly so long a history.)

Modern liberal Protestantism has provided a laboratory test of how Christianity might accommodate itself to the forces of modernity. Beginning with the Enlightenment, there have always been Protestants eager to come to terms with Christianity's "cultured despisers," in effect allowing each age's reigning secular orthodoxies to define the acceptable limits of religious belief. But that enterprise has proved chimerical. In each age, Protestant liberals jettison certain elements of their tradition, once considered essential, now dismissed as merely culturally conditioned and hence as obstacles to belief. But this process does not finally result in a solid, permanently valid core of belief, and each age discovers still more things that must be discarded.

Seldom do liberals examine the possibility that modernity itself, in the full sense of the term, is simply antireligious, that rejection of belief is essential to its self-understanding. Thus it cannot be satisfied by partial accommodations but ultimately demands from Christianity a complete surrender. Liberalism in religion succeeds in making faith more credible to modernists only to the degree that it makes it seem less benighted than before. But this very process of accommodation merely confirms modernists in their conviction that they are correct in rejecting belief and in their surmise that believers themselves are gradually recognizing that their faith is incredible. Unbelievers who undergo conversion are almost always attracted to religion's more traditional forms.

Seldom do liberals examine the possibility that modernity itself, in the full sense of the term, is simply antireligious, that rejection of belief is essential to its self-understanding.

Without anticipating whatever surprises history may have in store, it appears that liberal religion will scarcely even exist as an organized movement a generation from now. It does not succeed in winning over the skeptics but (again illustrated in the history of modern Protestantism) persuades believers that they do not need religion at all. It exists to ease its adherents' way into secular modernity.

Religious liberals of all major faiths have labored, over a century and a half, to forge a viable religion that is both faithful to its most authentic traditions yet also modern. But liberal Protestantism ends inevitably in the corrosive skepticism of the Jesus Seminar and of Episcopal Bishop John Shelby Spong, in the "death of God" theology, in a deference toward other religions which makes it now impermissible to affirm the primacy of Jesus Christ. If Pius X painted Catholic modernism with too broad a brush, the modernists themselves were unable, on their own principles, to distinguish authentic from inauthentic new expressions of the faith. The movement included people like Alfred Loisy, whose beliefs could hardly have been reconciled with Catholicism under any circumstances.

The ambiguities of modernity itself are at the heart of the question. Rudolf Bultmann famously asked how a man who turns on a light bulb and shaves with an electric razor could still believe in miracles, to which the simple answer is that many people do. If a man were given an assignment to locate conservative Christians swiftly, and if in adjoining rooms there were conventions of engineers and poets in session, he would be well advised to visit the former. Many technologists are very devout in traditional ways, even though their work places them much closer to the heart of a certain kind of modernity than does the vocation of the poet, which has hardly changed over thousands of years.

One of the many ambiguities of modernity is the polarization between its "hard" manifestations—science, technology, and industrial capitalism—and "soft" versions—the radical subjectivism which is expressed in its purest forms by artists. But every elementary account of artistic modernism emphasizes the sense of fragmentation, the loss of every certitude, inherent in it, so that to be modern in this sense is necessarily to eschew all religious truth. (When a "modern" artist becomes a believer he ceases to be modern in the true sense.)

The church has in fact eventually accommodated itself to the genuinely positive strains of modernity, and there is much to be said for its chronic policy of caution. Robert Bellarmine was right to warn Galileo that he should not insist on the truth of the heliocentric theory because at the time (and for some time afterwards), it was an unconfirmed theory. The best of the Enlightenment has long been incorporated into Catholic thought, in ways far different from the pell-mell surrender negotiated by some eighteenth-century Christians. In due course the censures of the "Syllabus of Errors" were found (at least in the short run) not to be relevant to certain kinds of political liberalism. Despite Pius XII's *Humanae generis*, orthodox Catholic scholars (including Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger himself) have profitably moved in new theological directions.

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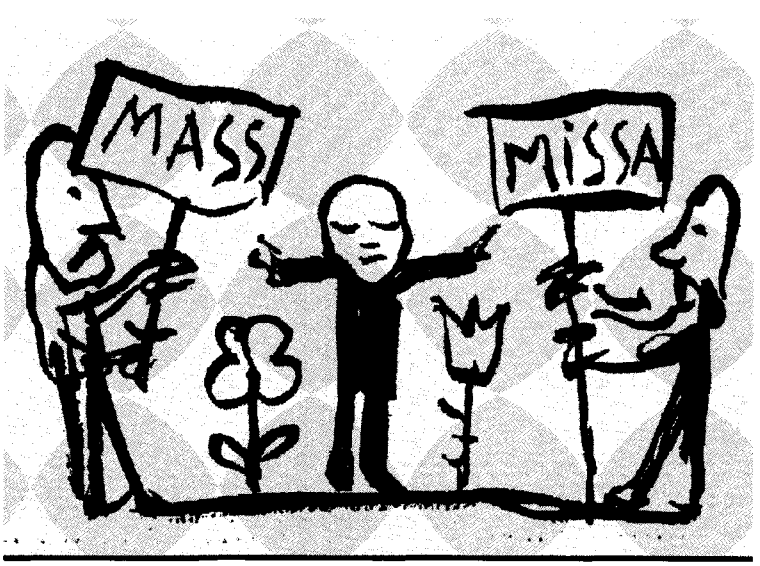
The skeptical stance of the church toward modernity apparently institutionalized in the present pontificate has been necessary because, almost as soon as the Second Vatican Council was over, the entire Western world was engulfed in the social and cultural upheaval dubbed "the sixties," during which it was impossible to make measured judgments about change and the church was severely pressured to abandon virtually all of its beliefs.

The phenomenon of the sixties was largely Western, and that too raises an unresolved question about the universal church's appropriate response to modern culture. Modernity is defined almost always in terms of the Western history of the past five hundred years, as though those cultures which did not pass through the revolutionary crucibles of the modern West are simply backward and fated to travel the same road belatedly. (Thus the irony whereby liberals now hope that the next pope will be a Western European, possibly even an Italian, while many conservatives would be happy to see an African ascend the throne of Peter.)

Every dialogue has a senior partner, and the possibility of the church's reaching some kind of rapprochement with modernity depends on who that senior partner is. Liberal religion treats the secular culture as possessing a superior wisdom and restricts religious beliefs to what the culture allows, including endorsing every movement deemed to be "progressive" (Marxism, feminism, the sexual revolution, environmentalism).

In the end such liberalism is unable to explain why religious faith has any value at all, since by its criteria the churches manifest merely a long history of reactionary errors. The liberal churches do not reserve to themselves any final right to pass judgment on modernity, and any reservations about its unfolding are automatically deemed obscurantist. (Is abortion progressive and humane or retrograde and violent? That hardly matters, since the spirit of the times demands it.)

Paradoxically, the church can come to terms with what is best in modernity only from a firmly orthodox perspective, in which the church is sure of its status as the senior partner in the dialogue. The charge of "triumphalism"—the claim to superior wisdom and authority—is often made against preconciliar Catholicism, but to the degree that the epithet has validity it must also be applied to Vatican II's supposedly seminal gesture of rapprochement with the modern world—*Gaudium et spes*. The Vatican practice of titling documents by their first few Latin words has helped perpetuate a misunderstanding of the decree, in that "joy and hope" sounds an optimistic note, while the next few words ("grief and anguish") immediately recognize the negative side of modernity.



Gaudium et spes is accommodating to modernity mainly because it refrains from mere condemnation and offers instead a hand of friendship. But it is also a claim of senior partnership on the part of the church. The modern world embraces a fervent dream of human well-being. But lacking the gospel of Jesus Christ, all its hopes are doomed to be disappointed. Thus the church stands ready to provide that which alone would allow modernity to achieve its fulfillment.

This conciliar outlook manifests itself in numerous particular ways—the dismissal of atheism as "foolhardiness," the condemnation of abortion as an "unspeakable crime," the reference to the "plague of divorce." But less commonly recognized is the way in which even the "progressive" elements in *Gaudium et spes* grow out of what must be called a classical mentality.

The council discovered the basis for hope in the fact that human beings are asking, "What is man? What is the meaning of suffering, evil, and death? What happens when this earthly life is ended?"—questions which modernity itself has found it impossible to answer and which postmodernity has declared inherently meaningless. *Gaudium et spes* comes to terms with modernity in classical ways, by recalling perennial truths about human nature, conscience, moral law, and the need for religious faith. (Thus also the council's best known rapprochement with modernity—*Dignitatis humanae*—rests upon a classical understanding of human freedom and dignity.)

The thought of John Paul II itself provides a major example of this approach, a broad and ambitious attempt to relate the Catholic faith to everything positive in modern culture. It is not coincidental that the council's decree on the church, *Lumen gentium*, is itself "triumphalistic" (the church as the light of the world) and reaffirms Vatican I's teaching about papal authority.

Part of modernity's unfolding claim for itself, at least since the eighteenth century, has been precisely a kind of temporal and cultural imperialism, the assumption that its ways ought to be binding always and everywhere. But if God is the Lord of history, then he stands in judgment on every age, and modernity cannot, more than any other era, claim for itself a historically privileged position. □

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heartfelt acceptance. The documents read more like invitations than injunctions. What is the significance of this "new" style?

The new style is profoundly significant and, in my opinion, goes to the heart of the council. The council is about *style*. This time the cliché got it right: The medium is the message. For more than thirty-five years, we have been debating the meaning of Vatican II, especially in the face of interpretations that tend to minimize its import by contradicting what others see as "the spirit of the council." We can take the phrase "spirit of the council" to mean that the documents of the council have a reality and meaning that transcend a narrow reading of the texts which, in proof-texting fashion, fishes out sentences to accommodate a minimal interpretation. "Spirit of the council" means no aspect of the council can be understood without taking a broader reality and meaning into account.

But "spirit" is a vague term, incapable of providing firm guidelines for interpretation. What it tries to indicate is altogether valid, but the word is too soft to do the reality justice. "Style" might at first glance seem to labor under the same, or worse, disabilities, for we tend to think of style as ornamentation, "mere rhetoric." Yet on a deeper level we know well that content and mode of expression are inextricably intertwined, that there is no thought without expression, and expression is what style is all about. The problem we've had in interpreting Vatican II stems in large measure from our obsession with trying to figure out *what* the council said without taking due account of *how* the council said it. Yet upon first glance—and, I think, upon last glance—the *way* the council put things is its most obvious, striking feature. Its style sets Vatican II off from every previous council. It is worlds apart from Trent. It spoke in a new way.

For the first time in history official ecclesiastical documents promoted respectful listening as the preferred mode of proceeding, as a new ecclesiastical "way."

But was it new? Well, it was new for a council, but otherwise it replicates, to a remarkable degree, the style the fathers of the church used in their sermons, treatises, and commentaries down to Saint Bernard in the twelfth century, before the advent of Scholasticism. I believe this similarity is not accidental. *Lumen gentium*, the doctrinal centerpiece of Vatican II, provided the stylistic model for subsequent church documents. The formulation of *Lumen gentium* was surely influenced by the patristic revival led by Henri de Lubac and others, which used as a resource not only many patristic motifs regarding the church but also the fathers' style of discourse. It was a style based on rhetoric understood as the art of persuasion, the art of finding common ground that will enable previously disagreeing parties to join in action for a common cause. It was not, in the first instance, the art of winning an argument and proving your enemy wrong. The style of this *nouvelle théologie*, to use Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange's contemptuous designation for what de Lubac represented, was perhaps even more at issue than doctrines when that theology was being held suspect and subversive before the council. The style—"mere style"—was the threat.

This takes us to an even deeper level. Michelangelo painted traditional subjects, but it is his style that makes them memorable. Without style, no Michelangelo. Style is not manners or ornament but the expression of deepest personality. My "how" better expresses who I am than my "what." I am a Jesuit, a historian, an American. That's what I am. But it's my style that makes me real—loving and genuine, or cunning and contrived. Nobody loves me for my what. If I'm loved, I'm loved for my how. If I enter the pearly gates, it will be because of my how, not because of my what.

At stake in the debates over the interpretation of Vatican II is the style of the church. What was the change Vatican II wanted to effect, and can it be put in a word or two? The change was a change in style, and, yes, I have put it in a word. *How* do we want the church to be—*how* in its procedures as well as in the hopes and fears and loves of all its members, as these are expressed individually and collectively? That was the big question Vatican II addressed and answered. It answered it by the overall style of its language as well as by specific vocabulary that reflected and made explicit what the style implied.

The term "dialogue" recurs incessantly in the documents of the council. After the council, the word was so shamelessly invoked as the panacea for all problems that one became pained on hearing it. Even today it sounds "so seventyish." That should not obscure for us the profound implications of the term. For the first time in history official ecclesiastical documents promoted respectful listening as the preferred mode of proceeding, as a new ecclesiastical "way." "Freedom of speech" was a value of the modern world, open to abuses, of course, but nonetheless based on a respect for conscience and the dignity of each person's convictions. Dialogue tried to open the church to it.

Dialogue assumed a certain specificity with "ecumenism." This was respectful listening to the other. The respectful listening necessarily implied a readiness to change in the light

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of what the dialogue might reveal. It implied the church as learner as well as teacher. It was rooted in the respect for conscience and trust in its truths that the council expressed with such force. The decree on revelation, moreover, underscored the mystery of our encounter with the divine and hence the inadequacy of all our confessional statements about it.

The institutional correlate of dialogue was "collegiality." This term rests on a venerable theological and canonical heritage, but a heritage that had been consigned almost to oblivion. It indicates true collaboration between bishops and their priests, among bishops, of bishops with the pope—collaboration, not just consultation. It indicates a significant break with the long-standing and then-current style of ecclesiastical dealing. Although the documents of Vatican II themselves give little evidence of it, we know from other sources that a change in the style as to how the Holy See itself functioned was a special *desideratum* for most of the bishops who attended the council.

What was the style that needed changing, and from where did it spring? The style was "modern" in that it crystalized in the nineteenth century as the Catholic reaction to the French Revolution. "Liberty, equality, and fraternity" had overthrown the God-given order of society, and thus the revolution and the philosophies that underlay it had no redeeming qualities. Against them the church could assume only an uncompromising stance. As "modernity" in the nineteenth century assumed an ever-more ideological definition, the church, especially in the person of Pius IX, rejected it with ever greater intransigence. As the evils of democracy spread, the papacy began to function in ever more autocratic fashion, even in dealing with bishops. When "modern ideas" seemed to creep even into Catholic circles, the papacy, most notably under Pius X, pursued a policy of internal surveillance, punishment, and retaliation unprecedented in its effectiveness. The Holy Office of the Inquisition functioned with a vigor it had not known since it was instituted in the sixteenth century.

A new papacy and a new papal style had come into being that emphasized, almost to the point of caricature, the authoritarian strains in the Catholic tradition and that set the church against and above every person and idea outside it. Benedict XV, Pius XI, and Pius XII tempered these policies and attitudes. Pius XII, in a Christmas message toward the end of World War II, for instance, put in the first good word for "democracy" ever to come from the Holy See. Still, an ecclesiastical style, not altogether dissimilar in certain particulars to the style of modern totalitarian states, prevailed. To that extent it was an acceptance of a truly bad aspect of modernity. It was a top-down style which ignored the horizontal traditions of Catholicism that had made the patristic and medieval church such a vibrant and creative reality. Respect for conscience, with its deep roots in the Catholic tradition, got badly sidelined, even as it was being emphasized by nineteenth- and twentieth-century thinkers in the secular and Protestant traditions.

It was a change in this closed, ghetto-like, authoritarian style that the council wanted to effect. The council's statements on freedom of conscience were desperately needed to redress the balance. Rather than maintain the siege style that rejected everything in the modern world, the council wanted to open the church to what was valid and helpful in it, much of which was a retrieval of its own deepest traditions. It did not, for instance, want to turn the church into a democracy, as its almost obsessively repeated affirmations of papal authority demonstrate. But it did want to redefine how that authority (and all authority in the church) was to function, namely, with a respect for conscience that transformed church members, especially the laity, from "subjects" to participants. Vatican II did not want the church to abdicate its role as teacher of the gospel, but it insisted the church, like all good teachers, needed to learn as it taught. The church could teach seated around the table in the seminar room as well as by thundering truths to passive ears from the heights of the lecturer's podium.

The council hit the church like a great meteor from outer space. For a decade or so, the meteor seemed to wreak havoc. How could it have been otherwise? A radical change had been called for. Immediate implementation was the battle cry, but it was a battle cry without a battle plan.

What happened? The council hit the church like a great meteor from outer space. For a decade or so, the meteor seemed to wreak havoc. How could it have been otherwise? A radical change had been called for. Immediate implementation was the battle cry, but it was a battle cry without a battle plan. Holders of ecclesiastical offices were especially hard hit. They did not know how to function in this new mode and sometimes even wondered if they were to function at all. In 1968 the encyclical *Humanae vitae* created even more confusion, partly because of what it taught, partly because of how Paul VI made the decision. In the same decade a wider upheaval erupted around the world, most notably among students, attacking authority and law enforcement of every kind. As in the Chinese curse, the times were interesting.

By the mid-seventies moderate voices within the church had begun to prevail. Dialogue, collegiality, ecumenism, and positive engagement with "the modern world" began to take concrete form. Within the United States, the episcopal con-

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To St. Peter

(After Herbert)

The cock crowed
as you denied all
and let them all deride Him
while you fled
to hide.

You abode still
in your lie
as they spiked Him
to a tree
stripped
and hoisted up for all
to see.

The cock crowed;
still
you kept aside
and let them all
divide Him
flesh from life.

Aye, Peter,
ill from the load of your lie
you wept
and he bled dry
from crown and side.

And I, bowed,
do hide,
for daily my
briny will
salts His side.

Tom Donlon

ference seemed to exemplify beautifully how these realities could come together in a new ecclesial style that was genuinely collaborative without entailing an abdication of responsibility. It seemed a style consonant with the council's insistence on the respect due to every human being's conscience and opinion.

This is not to say all was well. (Is it ever?) With the election of Pope John Paul II in 1978, a strong hand took the helm. The papacy entered into a new phase in world affairs, assuming a leadership that, with the aid of the modern media, it had never before enjoyed. Within the church itself, electronic communications of various kinds helped the papacy assume an importance and all-encompassing authority unknown in previous ages. It sometimes began to seem that papal authority was no longer just the ultimate authority in the church but the only authority. As never before, we had come to live in a papal church.

Questions about the style with which such papal authority is exercised should not, therefore, come as a surprise. John Paul II is not only aware of the issue but has himself called for its examination in his 1995 encyclical *Ut unum sint*. In December 1998, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith published a document along similar lines titled "Reflections on the Primacy of Peter." The clock cannot be turned back so as to ignore the advantages of a strong Petrine ministry, but the question recurs as to just *how* that ministry is to be exercised. The Petrine ministry is not only the most important in the church, it sets the pattern for how bishops deal with their priests, how priests deal with their flocks, and how Catholics deal with one another and with everyone else.

All is not well. For an analysis of the problem I refer the reader to Archbishop John Quinn's *The Reform of the Papacy* (Crossroad), and to two excellent articles in *America*—Hermann J. Pottmeyer's "Primacy in Communion" (June 3–10, 2000) and Ladislas Orsy's "The Papacy for an Ecumenical Age" (October 21, 2000). For whatever reasons, the fundamental teaching of Vatican II—its teaching about style, its teaching about how the church is to conduct itself—has in practice either been eroded or never been implemented. Collegiality, as Orsy points out, has become an empty word. Not only has centralization of decision making accelerated at a breathtaking pace, but the Vatican's style often seems more autocratic, less dialogical, and less collegial than ever. Lip service is paid to Vatican II, but an almost systematic deconstruction of the great aims of the council sometimes seems afoot even in the Roman curia.

How is the church? Is it compassionate, fair in its procedures, eager to hear both sides of controversial issues, open to the future, respectful of each person's truth? Does it look for common ground with people of good will in order to create an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect? Or does it make its own decisions without considering whether the "separated brethren" and others like them may have something to contribute? Is it suspicious and secretive, even in its dealings with its own members? Does it rely on special oaths, intimidation, and double talk to secure acquiescence to doctrines and decisions? Is closure on every issue to be secured from on high at the earliest possible moment, with no possibility of revision in the light of further discussion? Are those healing, eminently Christian, words, "I'm sorry," reserved only for mistakes committed in the distant past and never to be addressed to living persons?

Vatican II was a doctrinal council. It taught about the church. It taught about the church through ideas like collegiality and dialogue and by its style, which correlated with such ideas. It called for conversion from an old style of being church to a new style. Old ways don't die easily. Conversion is hard, but the council was certainly clear about what the conversion would look like. For me that's the challenge of the council and its deepest, pressingly pertinent significance. □

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Richard Alleva

I READ THE BOOK

'Hannibal': Nearly undigestible

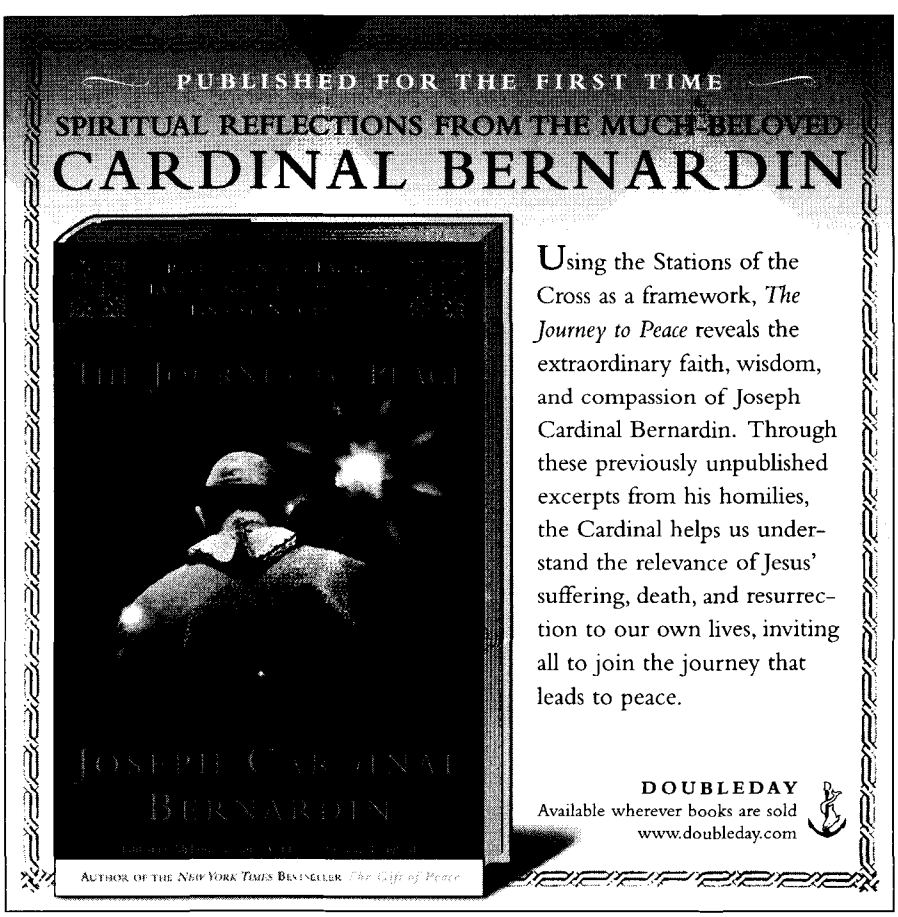
Before Rand Cooper reviews *Hannibal*, I would like to recall something unusual that happened before this film adaptation of Thomas Harris's novel went into production. I do this to make two points: (1) morality and aesthetics not being separable, a philosophical disease, nihilism, can wreck a literary form, such as melodrama; (2) confronted with stark nihilism, even Hollywood filmmakers can display moral revulsion.

Upon *Hannibal*'s publication, three of the four filmmakers who had covered themselves in glory (fame, great reviews, Oscars) by making its predecessor, *The Silence of the Lambs*, into a movie, and who had every reason to lick their chops over the prospect of repeating their success with a sequel, announced they would have nothing to do with it. Actress Jodie Foster, scriptwriter Ted Tally, and director Jonathan Demme, no matter what disappointment they felt with the literary quality or cinematic potential of the new book, could have signed on and then reshaped the story to their taste. Instead, they simply walked away from the project. This curt abstention was startling but, though the three obeyed the unwritten Hollywood rule of not publicly badmouthing abandoned projects, I think it is easy to guess at their motives once you have read both *The Silence of the Lambs* and *Hannibal*.

The first of Harris's books featuring the genius serial killer Hannibal Lecter, *Red Dragon*, did well with both the critics and the public, but it was the second, *The Silence of the Lambs*, which brought the author into his kingdom. When vulnerable but dauntless FBI agent Clarice Starling engaged the brilliant, lethal mind of Dr. Lecter within his maximum-security cell in order to track down another serial killer, the relationship projected "chemistry" long before it found its way into a movie. Yet it was certainly the movie version that made that relationship more than vivid, made it almost mythic. As I wrote of the film in this magazine (April 5, 1991), "As Starling probes Lecter for clues, Lecter probes Starling for the roots of her need to save people...At this moment, the viewer has a glimpse of good and evil eternally staring at each other across an impassable force field that lifts this movie above the common run of melodrama."

Good and evil. Staring at each other, fascinated. Not merging. Just understanding and acknowledging each other. That was the key to the success of the Lecter-Starling scenes, which were so powerful that they pretty much overcame the flaws of the rest of the book: its occasional plot absurdities, the flat writing, a certain gratuitous nastiness. Particularly evocative was the way Lecter's malevolence, seemingly absolute and not reducible to psychological explanation, amplified our sense of Starling's goodness. The cannibal doctor's very being presented an acid test, an initiation rite Starling had to undergo before her heroism could emerge. There was certainly moral ambiguity in the fact that virtue had to be aided by evil to catch evil. But it is a sad fact of life we have to learn before becoming truly adult that an evil source can engender a good outcome and vice versa. And it was to the credit of *Red Dragon* and *The Silence of the Lambs*, though neither was ever anything more than classy pulp fiction, that they contained and dramatically demonstrated this truth.

Then came *Hannibal*, a book that concluded the trilogy but also played havoc with the peculiar accomplishments of its predecessors. It begins seven years after *Silence*. The fugitive Dr. Lecter is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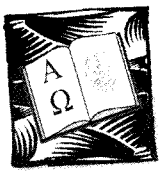

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now posing as Dr. Fell (!) while giving lectures on Dante and holding a curatorship in Florence. Clarice is still an agent but vilified in the press for a drug bust gone wrong (though she herself behaved irreproachably). Naturally, the FBI puts her on the trail of Hannibal. Much, much transpires, the conclusion presenting us with a Clarice who has joined the doctor in a cannibal feast and is now his constant companion as they savor the delights of Europe together—good food, fashionable clothes, museums, nights at the opera. What strategies does the author deploy to get from point A to point Z and to make all this believable or at least acceptable?

For the doctor, Harris employs two devices. First, he does precisely what so many readers rightly praised the novelist for not doing in the previous installments: he gives Lecter a psychological motive for his malevolence, a World War II atrocity in which the boy Hannibal realizes that his sister has been killed and devoured by soldiers.

Second, Harris employs what I can only call a Steve-the-Crocodile-Hunter strategy. For those of you fortunate enough not to have a nine-year-old who forces you to watch TV nature shows, I must explain that Steve is an idiotic Australian Crocodile Dundee clone who blunders into swamps and jungles all over the world, jerks perfectly well-behaved and self-respecting rattlesnakes out of their nests, and pokes innocent hippos and sharks in the snout just for the sake of getting them to attack him. As he dodges their lunges, he shouts at his audience, "Blimey, mates! This animal is vicious! He wants to kill me!! What on earth can make any creature this malevolent?" Though Steve keeps assuring us that these encounters will enable him to "publish valuable articles in nature journals all over the world" (in your dreams, Steve), I keep hoping that his foot will slip and he'll be devoured by some lovely, dignified predator who then will finish off the camera crew for dessert.

Well, Thomas Harris is a literary Steve the Crocodile Hunter. He keeps setting characters much more odious than Hannibal on the trail of the doctor: a pedophile billionaire; a corrupt, lecherous Justice Department bureaucrat; an avaricious Italian police official; various thugs and assassins. As these petty monsters gang up on the grand monster, we root for the grand monster to eat his tormentors, much as I long for those formidable animals to eat Steve.

As for Clarice, her final defection from the FBI is prepared for by Harris through his depiction of the agency in this post-Ruby Ridge era as rotting from within and willing to sacrifice its best agents on the altar of political expediency. So, hey, if you can't find advancement in the FBI, why not tour Europe with a suave and cultured cannibal?

Do these literary strategies work? Of course not. To evoke the real horrors of World War II as a rationale for the outré atrocities of a melodramatic concoction like Lecter is tasteless and borders on moral irresponsibility. If the idea of a child so traumatized by his sister's killing that he himself imitates her destroyers has any validity, it needs real psychological exploration, not the superficial

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and opportunistic handling Harris gives it.

Yes, Lecter dispatches monsters worse than himself in this latest book, but what of it? This doesn't create suspense since we don't care about any of his victims. Rather, it puts us in the position of the Roman mob watching gladiators and beasts kill each other. Besides, how are we to forget the innocents that the doctor killed in the previous novels?

Worst of all is Clarice. Turning this plucky, caring, all-American heroine into Eurotrash may be the worst thing an author has done to a character in the history of popular fiction since Conan Doyle launched Sherlock Holmes over the Reichenbach Falls in the embrace of Professor Moriarty. But Doyle could resurrect Holmes. How can Harris redeem Starling?

Of course, if Harris had had the literary style for it, he could have turned Hannibal into a piece of stylish perversity, something along the lines of an Aubrey Beardsley drawing accomplished with words. Readers can withstand all sorts of narrative nuttiness if highly textured, agreeably mannered writing projects the story into a cloud-cuckooland with a topsy-turvy morality of its own. But how could a writer who perpetrates a sentence like, "As he backed into the shadow across the street, his nose was last to disappear" be up to the task?

So now we can see why the three filmmakers walked away from *Hannibal*. Almost all of Jonathan Demme's major films, from *Citizens Band* to *Beloved*, express a belief in the unpredictability and improvability of human nature. What was he to make of Harris's newly hatched misanthropy? Ted Tally began his playwrighting career with an interest in heroism: his first major play was about the explorer Robert Scott. What was this author to make of a fictional world in which one can only root for villains against other villains? Jodie Foster is not only a good actress but a fierce feminist. What could a feminist make of a heroine who ditches her own heroism to become the Galatea of a monstrous Pygmalion?

Of *Silence*'s four award winners, only the most notable one remained to make *Hannibal*, Anthony Hopkins. He is the chief reason I will go to see the new movie. What the book's language lacks in stylishness, Hopkins has in every part of his physique and physiognomy, in every shade of his gloating, unforgettable voice. If Hopkins can make the doctor the same malefic imp he gave us in *Silence*, he may succeed in taking us to a cloud-cuckooland with a morality of its own. And he would be infinitely helped by the scriptwriter Steven Zaillian and the replacement director Ridley Scott if they could create a landscape in which Hannibal Lecter and Clarice Starling could once again face each other across a moral chasm, fighting each other, fearing each other, respecting each other, appalled by each other, but never, never merging. That Zaillian and Scott have (reportedly) jettisoned the novel's conclusion is a good sign. Melodrama needs simplicity. Evil, as Shakespeare taught us in *Richard III*, can be magnetic, intelligent, attractive. But the gusto of goodness must never die.

P.S. *After writing all the above, I went to see the movie. Every single thing I complained about has been eliminated.* □

SCREEN

Rand Richards Cooper

VERY DIFFERENT SENSES

'Hannibal' & 'Sound and Fury'

When I saw *The Silence of the Lambs* I was living in a European city where violent crime was virtually unknown. Strolling home at midnight after the movie, however, I found myself walking at the edge of the sidewalk, then right out in the street, well away from shadows and alleys. I was that rattled.

Silence was a terrific movie, chilling and slyly funny, with a lurking campy impulse (remember the *Bon Appétit* magazine in Hannibal Lecter's cage before he munches the two guards?) that didn't fully disclose itself until Lecter's priceless closing line, "I'm having an old friend for dinner." (In my view, Richard Alleva's reading of the film [see page 23], with Lecter and Starling as good and evil facing off across a moral chasm, gives *Silence* a Miltonic seriousness that misses its underlying horse laugh, the way it joined murder with manners in the figure of Hannibal the Cannibal, who cut through the fat of our pretensions to the bone of our hidden truths; who had such unerring, lethal taste.) Jonathan Demme's cunningly plain direction played the genre to perfection even as it winked away, showing us how to smile and squirm at the same time, prefiguring the *I Know What You Did Last Summer* and *Scream* schlock-shockfests of the decade to follow. As a genre film, *Silence* was all about having your cake and, well, eating it too. The ending, with Lecter free and feeling peckish, had sequel written all over it. But Demme had left his film teetering on the edge of pure camp; and where to go from there?

Way over the top, is director Ridley Scott's answer. His *Hannibal*, its Hans Zimmer soundtrack thick with swelling opera themes, offers us the cannibal as celebrity. Ten years on, Lecter—now a marquee name on the FBI's Most Wanted list, his personal artifacts coveted by collectors (his copy of *Joy of Cooking* fetches $16,000 at Sotheby's)—is living incognito in Florence, giving literary lectures while scarfing down the odd meal (very odd) when the mood moves

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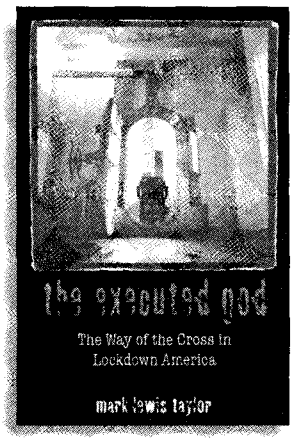

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him. With Clarice Starling still after him (played this time by Julianne Moore), and the Italian cops (led by a haggard, chainsmoking Giancarlo Giannini), *and* a horribly defaced victim, Mason Verger, who's spending millions devising lurid revenges involving wild boars, Lecter has lots to contend with; but never fear. His power knows no bounds. Vicious guard dogs cower at his approach.

The Silence of the Lambs succeeded through restraint, its energies all the more potent for being enclosed within the form of the thriller, as Lecter was enclosed in his cell. Let loose, both he and the film flail about wildly, his exchanges with Clarice conveying little of the taut, teasing thrill of when he was behind glass and wanted out. *Hannibal* opens with an FBI drug bust lifted straight from a Don Siegel action movie, and turns into a gruesome farce, á la *Delicatessen* or *Re-animator*, with Lecter rifling a hospital pathology lab for cooking utensils (more opera music!) and gleefully tossing off lines like, "I may have to filet your wife after all." Still, you can't help but relish Anthony Hopkins as the Ghoulish Gourmet (a role he also played, to horrific rather than comic effect, in last year's *Titus*), and it's amusing to hear him crafting culinary double-entendres out of Dante, or to learn that he ate his first victim, a professional flutist, to improve the quality of the Baltimore Philharmonic. Whatever it loses in subtlety, *Hannibal* makes up in morbidity, and ends by giving "high-grossing film" a whole new meaning.

An Oscar nominee for Best Documentary, Josh Aronson's *Sound and Fury* studies cochlear implantation, a potentially revolutionary surgical procedure that can bring a large measure of hearing to the deaf. This is not a story about medical technology, however, but about how we understand identity, community, and language. Is deafness a handicap we should strive to eliminate? Or is it a way of life—a culture—we should protect?

The film follows two branches of a Long Island family, the Artinians. Peter and his wife, Nita, are deaf, as are their three young children. Peter's brother Chris, however, is not, nor is his wife, Mari; and upon learning their infant son is deaf, Chris and Mari opt for cochlear implantation. When Peter and Nita tell their bright, adorable six-year-old, Heather, about the operation, the girl decides she'd like one too. She wants to hear bears growl at the zoo, she says. Chris and Mari urge the procedure, but Peter and Nita are reluctant, and an argument begins—with grandparents on both sides weighing in—that tears the family apart.

Aronson subtitles not just dialogue, but sounds, in brackets—"[Ocean waves breaking]"—that inescapably emphasize how much a deaf person misses, a tantalizing world of experiences a child like Heather can literally only imagine. ("If you had a cochlear implant," her grandmother tells her, "you could talk on the telephone.") To nondeaf people, cochlear implants present a good so self-evident, they hardly feel it needs explaining: "freedom, opportunity, and the key to the world," says Chris Artinian. Feeling pressured, Peter and Nita research the procedure. (Initially Nita looks into it for herself, but benefits are much less dramatic for adults, an audiologist informs her.) In their mounting reluctance, we sense a deep fear that hearing will alienate their child from them. They visit a cochlear implant school, where a group of kids, all wearing the small box and wire that transmit signals to a device implanted below the skin, are learning to talk. When Peter urges Heather to sign the story the kids are reading aloud, she refuses, embarrassed—and Peter and Nita see it as the first, dread step toward losing her. Through an interpreter, they question the parents of a cochlear child, asking whether they bothered to find out about the deaf world "before you just went ahead and did it." The conversation grows testy. "Why would you want to keep Heather in that world," the other parents ask, "and not broaden her horizons?"

From then on, the Artinians are on the defensive—against Chris and Mari, and against Peter's parents, who consider their resistance to the procedure irresponsible and selfish. Stung by overbearing and casually cruel arguments

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(What if you were a family of cripples, Peter's father asks—would you break your kids' legs?), Peter and Nita come to see the procedure as an assault on their identity. At the cochlear class, a parent dismisses sign language as "a crutch" that will hinder her child. Vehemently Peter objects. This is his language that is being wiped out. "I never knew you didn't accept deafness," he says to his parents at a backyard barbecue where the argument rises into open war. But what does it mean to accept deafness when there's an option, a way out?

Sound and Fury explores an area where technology, politics, and identity exist in a profoundly dynamic relation. "What if we lose deafness in the future," asks a group of deaf people assembled by the filmmakers, "and there are no deaf people?" Until very recently, the idea would have been seen as a triumph of medical science. But we have come far along a path honoring diversity, equating language (including sign language) with culture and identity, and turning "disability" into "difference," and it's hard not to hear something ominous in Chris Artinian's angry pronouncement that "deaf culture as they know it is done." "If your hearing culture was wiped out," Peter argues back, "hearing people would feel the loss and cry. Well, so will I."

Aronson treats all sides with remarkable even-handedness, letting us see how an observation that spells relief and triumph to one set of parents—"I don't think she realizes she's deaf," says the girl's mother at the cochlear class—sparks deep anxieties in the other. You can't help but feel for Peter and Nita, with their deepest motives put in doubt, and their own memories of having felt outcast as children pressed upon them by hearing people—they don't want to put their kids through that, do they? That I ended up thinking the other side had the better arguments may simply be more proof that what we believe is, for better and for worse, a question of who we are; and the best we can aim at is humility and imagination in the face of other people's persistent, hard-won otherness. □

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Benjamin Ivry

YOU COULD LOOK IT UP

The 'New Grove Dictionary of Music & Musicians'

With fitting hoopla, the second edition of the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* has appeared. It replaces the previous edition, from 1980, with nine additional volumes, making for a total of twenty-nine. The price is hefty ($4,850), but by stretching from twenty-four hundred contributors and 16 million words in 1980 to six thousand contributors and 25 million words today, the *New Grove*'s editors took a necessary lexicographical risk.

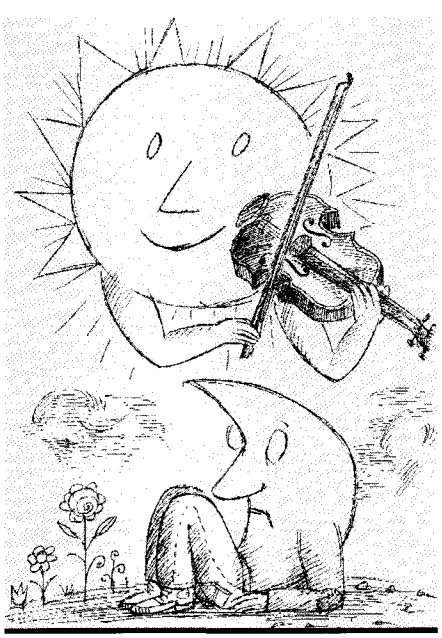
For those of us who find enjoyment and edification in dipping into *Grove* for all matters musical, this expansion increases the odds that we will find what we are looking for. Yet London's *Daily Telegraph* has charged that "*Grove* has grown too fat," as if a reference book were subject to our modern culture of Weight Watchers and Jenny Craig.

The *Telegraph* objected to the small group of new articles on pop and world music, but it neglected the work's backbone, thousands of articles by little-sung but highly capable and even eloquent writers on music. Most are from Britain, including Andrew Porter writing on the singer Cathy Berberian, Patrick O'Connor on composer Reynaldo Hahn, David Cairns on conductor Wilhelm Furtwangler, and Tully Potter on violist Tabea Zimmermann. And these are just the small articles; there are major new efforts like Cambridge University's Reinhard Strohm on the composer Heinrich Isaac, and French researcher Myriam Chimenes on Francis Poulenc. These are all helpful and reliable articles, gratifying to read. Articles of this quality were written mainly out of devotion, as authors' remuneration was poor, according to one report. The individual volumes are comfortable to handle.

Carping about dimensions also ignores the sensational news that now *Grove* is available online to libraries and individuals. Even the smallest college dorm room or divinity school library with Internet access may obtain the *Grove*'s authoritative information on the composer, musical work, tradition, or form of choice, all for an annual, monthly, or hourly online access fee ($295 a year for an individual; for information: www.grovemusic.com).

Navigating *Grove* online is generally easy, although it is still a work in progress. Unfortunately, there are no online illustrations, and as yet only a few links to outside Web sites with musical examples. The *Grove* article on J.S. Bach, for example, is linked to a Web site with some fairly mediocre performances of the great composer's work. But as *Grove* continues its ongoing efforts toward online refinement, one can expect links to improve.

As for the online texts, there is the satisfaction of finding details that only a computer index provides. Three searches are available online: the article search, full-text search, and expert search. The first will bring up only references found in the titles of articles, so typing in "Catholic" results in an ample, if not strikingly innovative, article on the Roman Catholic church's relationship to music. A full-text search supplies every mention of Catholicism among the 25 million words of *Grove*. Finally, an expert search will give the reader a choice of what is meant by catholic, upper- and lower-case *c*. The reader may choose a preferred definition or just proceed with the search.



When proper names are entered, unexpected—and sometimes trying—results occur. When I attempt an expert search for the church composer and conductor John Rutter, for example, *Grove* online asked me if John means "a disciple of Jesus," "a prostitute's customer," or "a room equipped with washing and toilet facilities." Mr. Rutter's last name was read by the computer as "rut," with equally unfortunate choices of definitions. I finally did prevail by ignoring the definitions and carrying on to the search results.

With courage akin to Pasteur's when he vaccinated himself, I next entered my own name into the expert search. My first name was defined as "a balsamic resin obtained from certain tropical Asian trees," and my last name registered as "a battle (1590) in which the Huguenots under Henry IV of France defeated the Catholics under the duke of Mayenne." However, when I chose neither of these distinguished associations but pressed on with the search, *Grove* returned the mention of my book on Francis Poulenc in the bibliography following the article on the composer.

Despite some surprises, then, the online version can function well. I know of no other reference work that will tell you whether a name is mentioned among so very many words. *Grove* is not fat, it is limitless. Whether *Grove* is on the reference shelf or online, teachers, students, researchers, and the common reader will find it an abiding source of satisfaction. □

Benjamin Ivry *is the author of, most recently,* Maurice Ravel: A Life *(Welcome Rain Publsihers).*

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Pius XII: Not vindicated

The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930-1965
Michael Phayer
Indiana University Press, $29.95, 324 pp.

Under His Very Windows
The Vatican and the Holocaust in Italy
Susan Zuccotti
Yale University Press, $29.95, 396 pp.

Richard Cohen

It is a peculiar statue. The work of a well-known Italian sculptor, Francesco Messina, it is set about halfway into Saint Peter's to the right of the main nave, next to a painting of Saint Sebastian and immediately opposite a statue of Pius XI. Pius XII is standing, in full regalia; his papal cloak envelops him, draped over his shoulders like a protecting towel as if he had just emerged from a swim. With one hand he blesses the faithful, but his face is turned away to the right, as if someone or something is distracting him. The face itself commands attention. Its lower half is finely formed, ascetic—the mouth small, symmetrical, full-lipped; the nose straight, Roman, slightly humped in the center of the bridge. Above it the eyes are hidden behind thick spectacles, like the goggles worn by racing drivers of fifty years ago, making the whole visage forbidding, even sinister. It has authority, but of a daunting kind.

For the Vatican to commemorate a past pope with such an effigy is extraordinary; but then finding the right way to see a man who was known in his lifetime as "the most holy one" has been a perennial problem. When, on October 9, 1958, Pius XII died, he was immediately hailed by Catholics as a saint. "It was as though you were touching heaven with your little finger just to get an audience with him," a Vatican archivist has recalled. He was the object of praise, admiration, and gratitude. Then in 1960, as Michael Phayer writes in *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust*, Eugenio Pacelli's reputation underwent a change with statements by German Catholic bishops at the time of the Adolf Eichmann trial in Jerusalem and on the eve of the Second Vatican Council. The cardinal of Munich, Julius Dopfner, spoke of regrettable decisions that had been made by church leaders during the Nazi era, and collectively German bishops apologized for the "inhumane extermination of the Jewish people."

Even then there was little or no criticism of Pius XII from Jewish organizations. Many Jews were far from pleased at Pius's stance, but only with German playwright Rolf Hochhuth's *The Deputy* in 1963 did the floodgates open. The criticism from all sides grew so intense, including people walking out of churches at the mention of Pius's name, that the Vatican ordered a special defense.

Paul VI, who had been one of Pius's closest advisers, ordered that all Vatican documents relating to the war be made public (twelve volumes have now been published, the final one in 1981, though as Phayer makes clear, several important papers have not been released). In November 1965, undaunted, Paul VI further instructed that the first steps should be taken toward declaring Pius XII a saint. In the week of his election as pope, Paul wrote a public letter announcing, "History will vindicate the conduct of Pius XII when confronted by the criminal excesses of the Nazi regime."

History has done no such thing. There is now a shelf of books assessing Pius's career, the most contentious of which, John Cornwell's 1999 study *Hitler's Pope*,

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may well have set back the Vatican's schedule for beatifying the pontiff.

One of the many virtues of the two books under review is that, although the authors have read Cornwell and use some of his research, they do not make the same mistake of stacking the evidence. Phayer's book, particularly strong on German source material, is at pains to list Pius's strong points—his piety, his loathing of Hitler, the instances of personal warmth, the occasions when he criticized Nazism. Phayer examines not only Pius's actions but those of other leading Catholics, and his study extends beyond the end of the World War II to follow the evolution of official Catholic thinking during the rebuilding of Germany, the cold war, and the gradual theological reforms that led to Vatican II. This enables Phayer to show how the church "completely reversed its position relative to the Jews," but it also gives him a more thorough reading of Pius XII's overall record. It is a damning and convincing verdict that emerges.

Phayer, who is professor of history at Marquette University and the author of *Protestant and Catholic Women in Nazi Germany*, dismisses the argument that for Pius to speak out would have made matters worse. He argues that Pius was a man "whose deep concern about communism and the intact physical survival of the city of Rome kept him from exploring options on behalf of the Jewish people." Further, Pius's fondness for Germany and his wish to play a major role in brokering peace meant that he favored "a diplomatic remedy for a moral outrage." The Vatican "gambled, putting its moral authority at stake for the sake of a favorable diplomatic position." Quoting from the private diary of the French Catholic writer Germaine Ribiere, Phayer finds Pius "psychologically and temperamentally incapable of decisive action."

Of course, most of these criticisms have been made before, but Phayer's even-handed approach to Pius's character and the breadth of his analysis, taking in the Vatican's role throughout Europe from well before the Holocaust to the post-war years and beyond, gives his book an authority that is greater than any other work since John Morley's 1980 study, *Vatican Diplomacy and the Jews During the Holocaust* (Ktav Publishing House).

Toward the end of Phayer's book, his detached tone deserts him a little and anger breaks through. His argument that Pius not only was sympathetic to leading Nazis after the war, but also actively helped in organizing an escape route for them is not fully convincing. Much rests on the exact standing of the pro-Nazi Austrian bishop, Alois Hudal, who on his own admission harbored Nazi war criminals—including Adolf Eichmann. Hudal was working in Rome throughout the Nazi era, and according to Phayer acted as an intermediary between Pius and the Nazi occupying forces. Susan Zuccotti, on the other hand, describes Hudal as "not a confidant of the pope" and having "little influence in the Vatican." At the least, it is a case not proved.

Zuccotti's book, *Under His Very Windows*, is almost a companion volume to Phayer's. There are considerable areas of overlap, particularly in the episode

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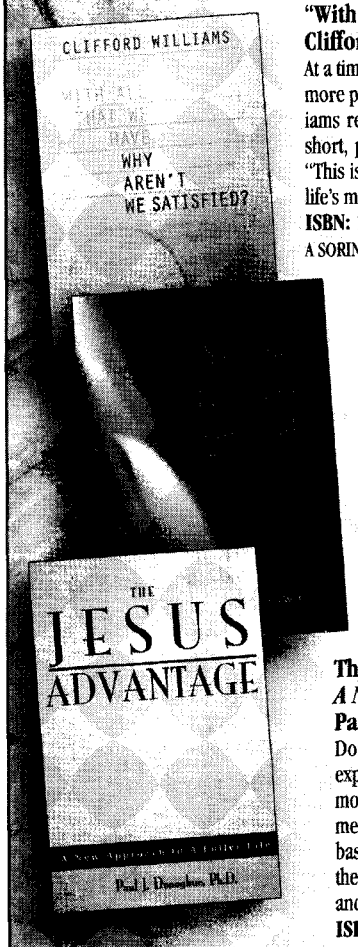

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which gives her book its title—when, in October 1943, 1,959 people were rounded up and detained within half a mile of the Vatican, the majority carted off in cattle trucks to die in Auschwitz, without the pope making any effective protest. For the most part, however, Zuccotti, who has written two previous books on the Holocaust, has a different ambit than Phayer. She is interested in looking at the papacy's record concerning the Jews under Italian control from 1928 on, even before Hitler's coming to power. She thus is critical of Pius XI as well as Pius XII, and she also goes further than any previous study in examining in detail every claim made in their defense.

Thus while Phayer accepts that Pius XII made concerted efforts to help Italian Jews hide, Zuccotti takes every instance where Pius is said to have so acted and subjects it to scrutiny: What did he do for Jews in Italian-occupied Croatia, or for Jews in France? What did he do after the October 1943 round-up to help hide Jews in Roman convents, monasteries, hospitals, and schools? In Vatican properties? What part did he play in the attempts to rescue Jews in the North or Central Italy, in Venice or Trieste? What exactly did he do, and what was in his power that he did not? If he did little, why did so many Jews after the war go out of their way to thank him?

Zuccotti's conclusion is as absolute and thorough as Phayer's. Disturbed by "the fundamental dishonesty of claims from ostensibly reputable sources that the Vatican helped refugees far more than in fact it did," she ends by confronting "the myth of papal involvement in the rescue of Jews." If Pius XII intervened at all, "that intervention was limited almost entirely to Jews who had become Catholics." In Italy and all areas occupied by Italian troops, she summarizes, "large numbers of priests, nuns, monks, and Catholic laypersons risked their lives to save Jews with little guidance from the pope."

These two books, taken together, seem to me the most convincing, and thus the most important, summary of the church's involvement with the Holocaust from the early 1930s to the present day. The care with which they have been written makes them especially moving. Yet they will not be the end of the story. The film rights to Hochhuth's 1963 play have recently been sold to a Spanish producer. The director will be the world-famous Greek filmmaker, Constantine Costa-Gavras, whose credits include *Z* and *Missing*. He is known for his highly politicized semifactual approach, and has stated that he wants "to reach a mass audience with films about oppression and injustice." Perhaps Phayer and Zuccotti's publishers may get their books to him in time. □

Richard Cohen *has written for the* Tablet, *among many other publications.*

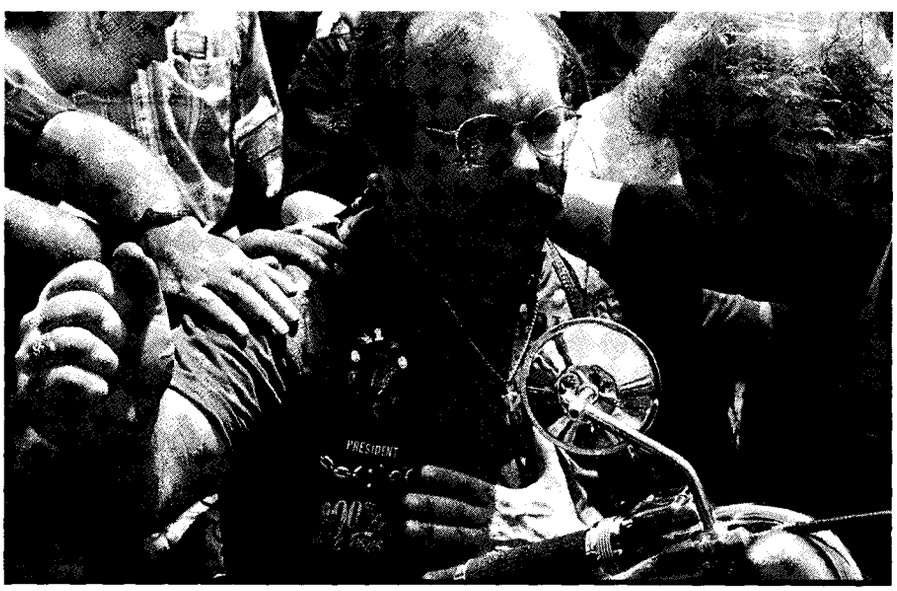
WE BRAKE FOR GOD

Riders for God
The Story of a Christian Motorcycle Gang
Rich Remsberg
Afterword by
Colleen McDannell
University of Illinois Press, $34.95, 263 pp.

Michael O. Garvey

One summer night a few years ago, as my brother and I were having a couple of beers in a local biker bar, I became uncomfortably aware that a conspicuously enraged patron at a nearby table was demanding our attention. It was easy to accede. He was built like a defensive end, shirtless except for a sweatstained leather vest, intricately tattooed, and evidently hallucinating under the influence of the nearly empty bottle of José Cuervo Tequila which an unprincipled bartender had surrendered to him much earlier. "Harleys!" he roared at us several times, as the other customers continued nonchalantly to converse. My brother and I had begun to agree upon a discreet, or even panicked exit when the drunken biker disgorged, among other things, the rest of his thought: "Harleys suck!" he bellowed, and, to our considerable relief, passed out on the laminated tabletop.

He may have been trying to provoke us by denouncing the most revered of all motorcycle brands in a sort of biker's version of *épater le bourgeois*, but what-



1200 cc of Holy Spirit at work

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ever he was doing, it was a memorable thing to encounter his ferocious and baffling conviction. "Harleys?" I thought, but didn't dare say aloud among the mostly hospitable Harley-Davidson devotees with whom we'd been drinking that night. "That guy wanted to pick a fight about Harleys? Who cares?"

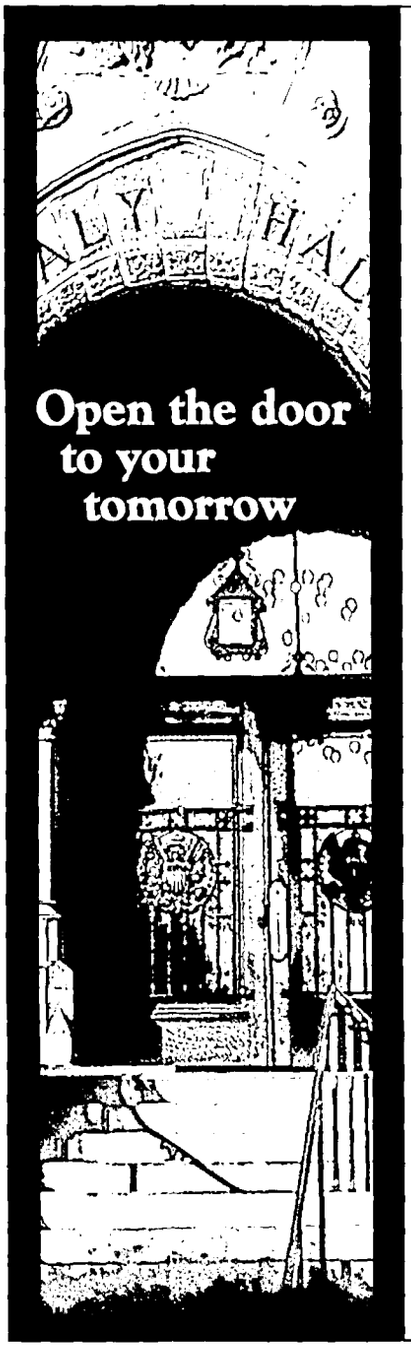
Rich Remsberg, a photographer who spent some time with a tribe of Christian bikers in southern Indiana, has amply documented several such confusing encounters in his incandescent and heartening book. He admits at the outset that biker culture and Christianity are equally foreign terrain to him. But ignorance need not be a handicap for a perceptive explorer, and the interviews Remsberg has conducted, no less than the photographs he has taken, are wonderfully ingenuous, allowing these unruly men and women to give sincere and powerful testimony of the stirring of the Spirit in their lives.

The bikers Remsberg came to know and, apparently, to love, belong to the Monroe County chapter of the Unchained Gang and to the Ellettsville House of Prayer, a nondenominational Christian church near Bloomington, Indiana. Larry Mitchell, who is president of the gang, pastor of the church, and a renowned Harley mechanic, eschews conventional doctrinal labels. The House of Prayer is neither fundamentalist, nor full-Gospel, nor Pentecostal, nor Spirit-filled, nor evangelical, nor charismatic, he says. "We're a church out of the Book of Acts."

Pastor Larry's assertion is certainly credible. Whatever the authors of *Dominus Iesus* might be inclined to say about its ecclesial status, this is clearly a community whose members believe and behave as if they surround Jesus who has recently and perceptibly rescued and forgiven them. The bikers of the Unchained Gang have renounced everything in their pasts—the felonious adventures, the random violence, the drug taking and selling, the sexual depravities—everything but their huge bikes and their outcast status. Retaining the picaresque swagger and aggressive instincts of their outlaw days, they now preach and live the gospel in a manner every bit as unsettling as the predations of the "one percenters," as the most savage Outlaws, Pagans, Bandidos, D.C. Eagles, Hell's Angels, Dead Men, Nomads, or Barons are colloquially called.

"I've never been mediocre about anything in my whole life," says one of the Unchained, a former one percenter who now calls herself Shalom, "and I see that in the other Christian gang members. Everything is extreme it seems like, but the Bible says, 'He'll spew out the lukewarm.' I don't think many of us need to worry too much about that." Shalom certainly doesn't. An alcoholic from the age of twelve, she was the property of a one-percenter gang for a dozen years and spent three years in prison for her role in a homicidal brawl in a rural bar.

Remsberg's documentary images of the white-trash antics at the annual Bean Blossom Boogie biker rally, the demonstrative communal prayer over the bikes, the altar calls, and the emotional outpourings of faith at the House of Prayer all illuminate the ardent accounts given by gang members of the clash to which



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they have borne witness between divine grace and redneck nihilism. "The only emotions I had was hate and lust," says one Unchained member named Sparky, describing the moment of his salvation. An abandoned, despairing, incontinent heroin addict who in more vigorous days "could cut a guy open with a knife and not have no remorse from it," was inexorably drawn into an altar call. He "started feeling these tears come to my eyes," and prayed, "Lord, I don't know you very good. I know you made your deal, but if you just make me one more deal, Lord, and let these withdrawals let up to where I can keep my coffee in me, where I could just get through the day, Lord, I'd read your book and I'd live for you the rest of my life."

With many (perhaps most) Catholics, I share an instinctive distrust of and distaste for highly emotional religious autobigraphy. I can almost hear a reedy organ in the background as some histrionic preacher narrates Sparky's story in the twangy accent of the southern Midwest. Nevertheless, the combined stories of Sparky, Chico, Nancy, Shalom, Randy, Harley, Modo, and the other Unchained gangsters have been told and tested in roadhouse taverns, at biker rallies, and in whorehouses and prisons. These are men and women in whom Christ has been seized, scourged, murdered, and raised up, and they want the world's attention. Concluding his own confession of faith, Sparky may as well be speaking for the entire gang: "The only reason I want this story out is so that it will glorify God. If it's for any other reason, then you're doing it for the wrong reason. And if it's to glorify God, to let people hear the story of the gospel of hope and peace, that's why I want it out. It's because it's true and it's real and I can't explain it all, and I don't know how it is all done, but it is real. It's not faking. I'm not getting paid for this or getting profit for this in any other way other than I want God to be glorified. That's all I got to say."

A prophylactic sneer won't diminish the power of that story much. □

Michael O. Garvey *is the author of* Finding Fault *(Thomas More).*

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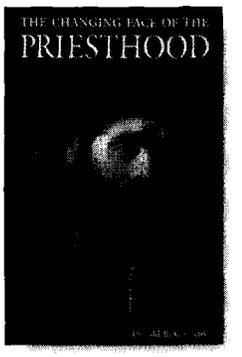

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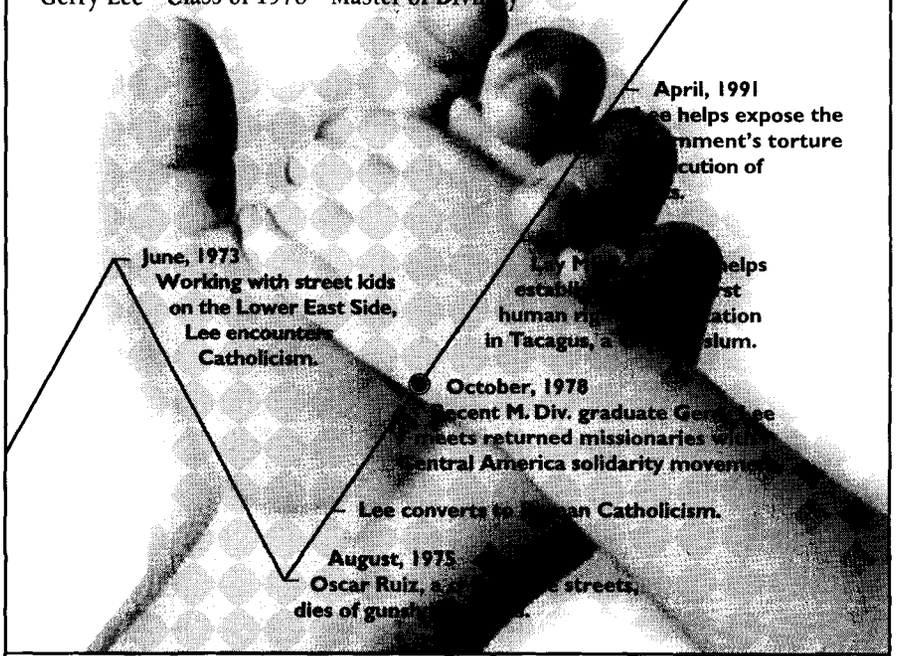

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FROM G.E. TO S.J.

In Good Company
The Fast Track from the Corporate World to Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience
James Martin
Sheed & Ward, $15.95, 216 pp.

Christopher Ruddy

When my wife and I went in for the requisite premarital investigation, the pastor asked each of us if we realized that our impending marriage was dissoluble only upon death. Standard, canonical stuff, but the gravity of the question caught me unawares: Did I really understand what I was getting myself into? "Tomorrow," Bob Dylan sang, "is a long time." I soon answered, "Yes," but the question has continued to challenge me. Married only a short while, I already see how frightening and joyful our vocation to each other can be.

Vocation is a trendy, sometimes contentious word today. Noble and high-minded, it sounds much better than "job" or "career"; thus one sees such book titles as "Ornamental Horticulture as a Vocation." Among Catholics it raises issues of equality, authority, crisis, patriarchy. What's often left unasked and untold is what Christian vocation is.

James Martin, S.J., associate editor of *America* and the author of several books, has written an engaging account of his journey from successful corporate businessman to vowed Jesuit. *In Good Company* is, in outline, a straightforward vocation story: an ordinary, occasionally indifferent Catholic becomes dissatisfied with worldly success and seeks something more meaningful. Hearing a call from God to religious life, Martin initially resists it, but eventually enters the Jesuit novitiate which transforms his life.

God is literally in the details, however. Martin's passage from Wharton graduate and General Electric whiz to Jesuit novice is striking, and he writes with honesty and wit. Attending a benefit for a Jesuit middle school, he declines the advances of a drunk woman, and tells a student, "If you ever want to attract women, just buy a black shirt like this one." Upon visiting Philadelphia's stone-and-marble seminary, he writes, "The Church Triumphant. I bet they didn't hold hands during the Our Father here." He is scathing in his critique of corporate life: Speaking to trainees, one executive tells them, "G.E. doesn't owe you a damn thing"; another executive, attempting to fire an older, accomplished worker, says, "F— compassion." Martin confesses that he cried from anxiety his first night in the novitiate and that, as part of his formation, cutting smelly, overgrown toenails in Jamaica sickened him. There is no pious airiness whatsoever in the book. Ultimately, we see Martin in the novitiate chapel on the night of his vows, filled with gratitude toward God and amazed that the formerly "rich, young (and depressed) man" is now inconceivably, unexpectedly happy.

Such humor and directness serve well his intended audience: younger adults searching for faith, and prospective priests and religious. Every Jesuit vocation director in America will buy this book by the gross (G.E. headquarters will not: Jack Welch, "America's best-ever chief executive," as *Newsweek* recently declared, will not be happy with its portrayal of his plutocratic ways). Martin is especially good at explaining unfamiliar terms and practices without being patronizing.

These virtues are also the book's vices. Martin's energetic style sometimes saps emotional depth, and so he remains content with somewhat cursory accounts of his spiritual and physical trials; his

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humorous asides, while invariably funny, occasionally seem designed more to keep the reader's interest than to advance the story. At other times, he tries too hard to show that he's just a regular guy, who enjoys the occasional pitcher of beer or toke of a joint. He seems unsure at times that his account is inherently attractive.

Martin's conversion story calls to mind Garry Wills's assertion, in *Papal Sin*, that the vocation crisis exists, in part, because the church's intellectual dishonesty—concerning, *inter alia*, the Holocaust, birth control, clerical celibacy, the role of women—deters many idealistic young men and women from considering priesthood or religious life. Trapped between their "high calling" and the church's "low standards" of truthfulness, such persons refuse to compromise their intellectual and moral integrity and so decline their possible vocations. "Why," as Wills asks, "would anyone want to adopt such an uncomfortable post if he could avoid it?"

Lacking neither intellect nor integrity, Martin offers an answer: God. Although ecclesial "structures of deceit" can and do hinder the hearing of God's call, *In Good Company* reminds us that every Christian vocation has its origin and sustenance in God, not humanity: "You did not choose me but I chose you." The great irony is that while Wills realizes that the church is, in the words of his hero, Saint Augustine, a *corpus permixtum*—a body shot through with sinners and saints—he nonetheless fails to see that vocations occur within that messiness as well. Part of any responsible, intelligent, mature commitment is acceptance of, not acquiescence to, the flaws of the object of commitment; any healthy marriage bears witness to that fact. There is no such thing as a vocation that does not involve human and institutional frailty. Or divine grace.

Written while in the first fervor of religious life, Martin's book does not directly take up Wills's dilemma. However, Martin points to the at-once compelling and liberating nature of Christian vocation: How can one resist such desire and joy? How can one not sell all that one has for the "pearl of great price," even if it involves much suffering? The demands made upon Martin in the novitiate in his difficult work with the dying—and the hard-won joy it brings—lead to a further thought. Might not part of the present vocational crisis be that some of our contemporary understandings of Christian vocation—be they of religious life, priesthood, marriage, or single life—far from being too demanding, do not demand enough, do not appeal strongly enough to our longing for generosity and selflessness?

No zealot or sap, Martin shows how surprisingly joyous and alluring commitment to God can be. At a time when much is being written and spoken about the future of religious life and the priesthood, *In Good Company* serves as a welcome witness—at once inviting, sane, grateful, and gracious—that every Christian vocation "costs not less than everything," but can give in return all to those who accept the call. □

Christopher Ruddy, *a former* Commonweal *intern, is a doctoral candidate in theology at the University of Notre Dame.*

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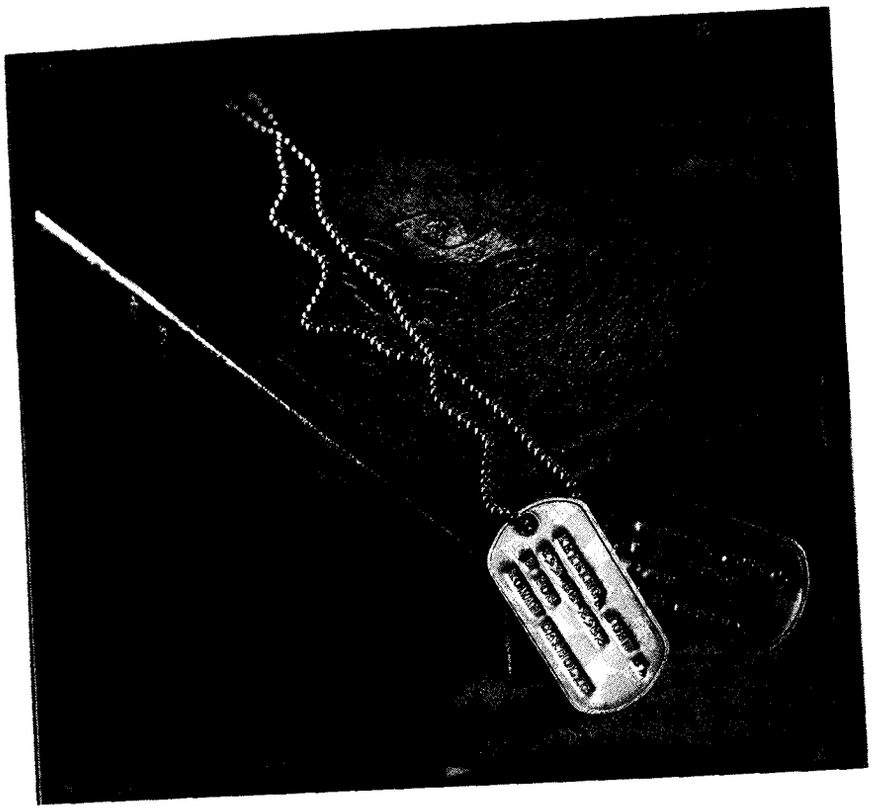

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PRACTICING CATHOLICS

Inventing Catholic Tradition
Terrence W. Tilley
Orbis Books, $24, 200 pp.

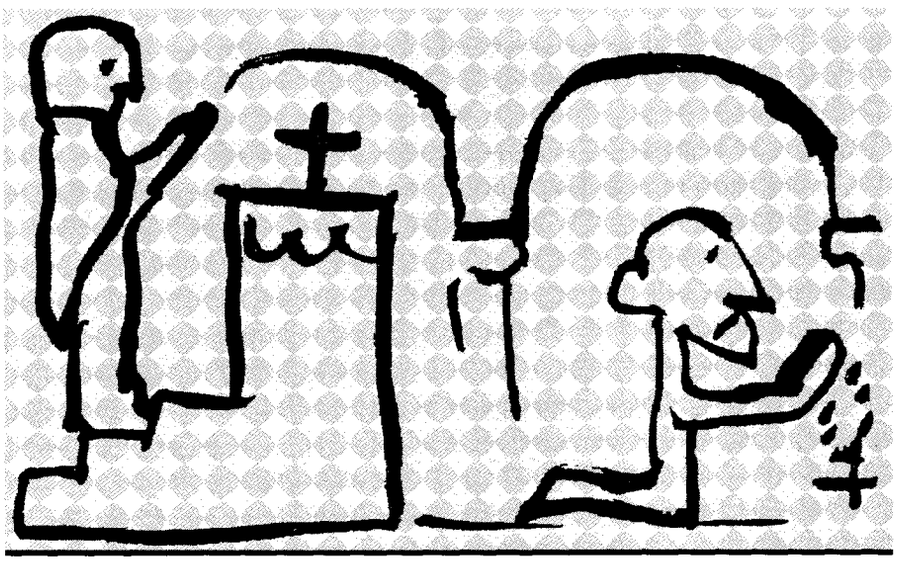
Paul J. Griffiths

Terrence Tilley's main purpose in this book is to develop and defend a general theory of tradition, a theory intended to capture, descriptively, what traditions are like and how they work. His secondary purpose is to apply this theory to the Catholic tradition, and in so doing to show how a good theory of tradition might be used to find a way through some of the intractable disagreements that divide Catholics at the moment.

A tradition, claims Tilley, is best understood as a complex set of enduring (but not changeless) practices. This is an understanding that focuses attention upon *traditio*, the act of handing something (or things) on or over to someone else, rather than upon *tradita*, the things handed on. Thinking about tradition as a set of practices by which things are handed over suggests that knowing a tradition is a learned and rule-ordered skill, a matter of knowing *how* rather than knowing *that*. A traditional person, in this reading, is a skilled player: she knows how to go on playing that game, as the philosopher Wittgenstein (whose influence is everywhere in Tilley's book) would say.

Paying primary or exclusive attention to the *tradita*, thinks Tilley, will lead to thinking that the important thing about traditions is what they hand down (creedal confessions, scriptural texts, ritual actions, institutional arrangements, and so on) and not the practices by which these things are handed down. It will also often lead to thinking that in order for the tradition to maintain its identity, it must keep the things it hands down the same. This in turn may lead to the kind of traditionalism whose main concern is with invariance: verbal invariance in confessional formulae, perhaps, or gestural invariance in liturgical performance, and it will suggest that the traditional person is a knowledgeable (rather than a skilled) person, one who is in possession of what the tradition hands on.

Tilley prefers the tradition-as-skilled-practice position for two main reasons.



First, he thinks it is a more satisfactory description of how traditions (religious, linguistic, artistic, and so on) actually work: one becomes a good Catholic principally by learning the complex skill of behaving and thinking like one, not by taking possession of some unalterable items of information or some fixed patterns of behavior. Second, he thinks that understanding a tradition as a malleable set of practices extended over time permits solution of some conceptual difficulties that are hard to handle within the tradition-as-invariant-*tradita* view. Chief among these is the fact that a formally unvarying *traditum* (a creedal confession whose words remain the same, for instance) will inevitably change in meaning as the context for its use changes. This makes incoherent the conservative traditionalist's desire to preserve the identity of the tradition by maintaining the formal invariance of what it hands on: such an attempt won't and can't work. Of course, there may be other pressing reasons to work at preserving the *tradita* unchanged; but maintaining the identity of the tradition can't coherently be thought important among them.

About all this Tilley is correct, and his analysis of recent work on tradition by philosophers, historians, theologians, and scholars of religion is accurate and perspicacious, if not exactly novel. The book provides a thorough, useful, and suggestive application to the Catholic case of the best recent thought on what traditions are and how they work, and for that reason alone it ought to be widely read. There are, however, some problems, among which I'll note two.

Tilley's opponents include not only those who'd like to think of the Catholic tradition's identity as given by the invariance of its *tradita* (we might call them crass invariance theorists), but also those who like to think of its identity as provided in large part by its *telos*, the goal at which it aims. These people, the developmentalists (John Henry Newman among them), are mostly happy to do as Tilley does, which is to think of the Catholic tradition as constituted by a complex set of practices extended through time. But they also think that these prac-

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tices are going somewhere, which is why they like metaphors of development (flowering, unfolding, blooming, and so on).

Tilley rejects developmentalist views because, he says, we have no practice-independent place from which to make or give content to such an assertion, which means (I think he thinks) that we don't and can't know where the tradition is going, and so we'd better not claim that it's going anywhere. But even by Tilley's own theoretical standards, this is not a proper criticism of developmentalism. Tilley is usually careful to say that constructivist theories of practice—theories that emphasize the contingency and malleability of the rule-governed practices that make up a tradition—don't entail antirealism. This means that you can perfectly well think what Tilley thinks about what the Catholic tradition is, and also think that becoming a skilled practitioner of it provides access to the way things are. But then it's also perfectly coherent to understand the Catholic tradition descriptively as Tilley does, and yet at the same time to see it as unfolding toward a final goal. It remains unclear (in an otherwise very clear book) why this option is to be rejected.

There is a second and deeper problem. It comes to the surface at various points in the book, but most clearly when Tilley discusses authority. Suppose we ask: Is the rule-ordered set of saint-making practices that (on Tilley's view) constitutes the Catholic tradition founded on an authoritative gift external to itself? Tilley's answer is no, and in saying this he means that we have no access to God's founding gift other than in and through the practices of the tradition. And this is so. But it is also (descriptively) true that among the more important practices of the Catholic tradition is constant reference to an authority external to itself, and that this practice does conceptual and practical work of a kind systematically occluded by Tilley's book.

It is no accident that the penultimate paragraph of the book quotes with approval one of Marty Haugen's liturgical songs, in which what is celebrated is not God but the worshipping congregation. The upshot of Tilley's fine book accords with this celebration: the reader's gaze is displaced from the Catholic tradition's constant struggle to develop practices that point away from themselves and itself, and is turned inward to precisely those practices and their practitioners. Even as a meta-traditional account of tradition, this will not quite do. Full confidence in his own method should have led Tilley to an acknowledgment that the practices that constitute the Catholic tradition are fundamentally and essentially exocentric and teleologically self-transcending. Or, if you prefer that in English, they point their practitioners away from themselves and are aimed toward a final goal that will make them irrelevant. Tilley's account of the Catholic tradition ignores or mutes these central aspects of the grammar of the faith, and as a result it is importantly inadequate in spite of its other great virtues. □

Paul J. Griffiths *is director of the Catholic studies program at the University of Illinois, Chicago.*

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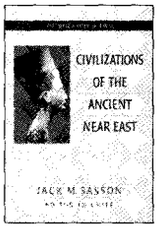

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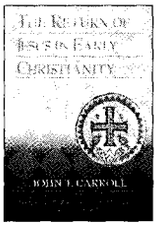

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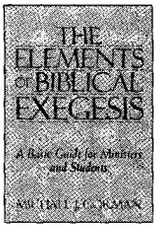

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YES

Can a Darwinian Be a Christian?
The Relationship Between Science and Religion
Michael Ruse
Cambridge University Press, $24.95, 242 pp.

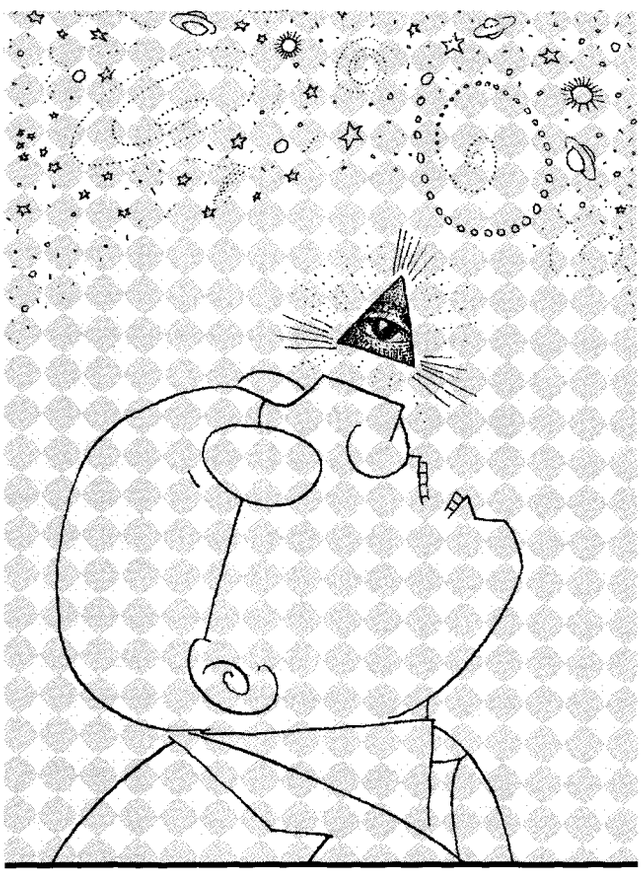
John F. Haught

Few scholars have written more voluminously and more interestingly about Charles Darwin than the philosopher Michael Ruse. For many years a professor at Guelph University and now at Florida State, Ruse continues to produce a steady flow of books and articles on the implications of Darwin's revolution. He was an expert witness at the famous Arkansas creationism trial and for many years has been a delightfully irrepressible presence at gatherings of scholars interested in the relationship of science and religion. A professed agnostic, he remains fascinated by religion and is always willing to engage in dialogue—in good humor and without an ounce of condescension—with theologians whom he is quite happy to call his friends.

Ruse may be the only living human who could write a book as unusual as this one. In *Can a Darwinian Be a Christian?* he wants us to understand, as always, that he remains not only an agnostic, but a materialist and reductionist to boot. As far as he is concerned, the existence of life and the emergence of its diverse kinds can be explained quite adequately in purely naturalist and even materialist terms. There is no need to invoke the idea of God. And yet, as he argues here in a series of chapters on various doctrines of Christian faith, it is not unreasonable or silly for Darwinians to be prayerful Christians as well. As a matter of fact a lot of them have been, and apparently without experiencing any inconsistency. Ruse points out, for example, that among the "top ten" evolutionists since Darwin we will find such ardent Christians as Theodosius Dobzhansky and Ronald Fisher. And the author himself is conversant with numerous contemporary theologians who have no difficulty with Darwinian evolution either.

Among the Christian thinkers Ruse admires most is Ernan McMullin, a philosopher at the University of Notre Dame who has often argued that evolution is consistent with Saint Augustine's vision of a divine plan unfolding over the course of time from a seminal potential given in the creation of the world. Perhaps out of caution Ruse has decided to comment mostly on traditional interpretations such as "the Augustinian Option," and he avoids encounter with the many other more adventurous theological perspectives on evolution now available. He strategically steers away from process theology, for example, which long ago made peace with evolutionary biology. He is content to deal only with rather centrist theological understandings of Christian faith, and he finds that Darwin's ideas can live quite comfortably even in this setting.

Ruse, however, has little use for the work of another Notre Dame philosopher, Alvin Plantinga, who, along with Phillip Johnson, William Dembski, and other anti-Darwinian Christians, dismisses fundamental tenets of evolutionary biology as incompatible with "intelligent design." Ruse is telling the "intelligent design theorists" not to be afraid. Even an entrenched agnostic evolutionist can see how Darwin and Christianity may get along, so why can't they?



Ruse still confesses that he agrees with the philosophical assumptions of Richard Dawkins and other evolutionary materialists. However, this may be hard to believe after reading such a sincere defense of classic Christian theology's logical compatibility with Darwinian science. The book's respectful and sympathetic treatment provides a refreshing alternative to Dawkins's own notorious tantrums about the stubborn persistence of theology in the face of all the Darwinian evidence against it. Although Ruse realizes that the most prominent Darwinians profess to be either agnostic or atheist, he argues here that it is not at all dishonest for scientifically educated people to embrace Christian faith and still be good Darwinians.

The author's own philo-

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sophical stance has itself evolved somewhat over the last decade or so. He seems to have pulled back from the debunking of ethics and religion that he had earlier expressed in an often-cited joint essay with sociobiologist E. O. Wilson. Arguing that our genes have led us to devise beliefs conducive to good behavior and hence to the survival of our genes, they had exclaimed that "the way our biology enforces its ends is by making us think that there is an objective higher moral code, to which we are all subject." Although Wilson would continue to view Darwinism as a definitive demonstration of the illusory character of our most cherished beliefs, Ruse would not. Distancing himself significantly from Wilson, he now advances the more temperate view that "not all explanations of why or how we got to believe things are necessarily such as to debunk the veracity of the belief systems." Ruse may have always believed this, but it is good to see him say it so explicitly here.

And yet a major difficulty carries over. The author continues, at least verbally if not intentionally, to fuse Darwinian science with philosophical materialism. Thoughtful believers, and not just the academically embattled defenders of "intelligent design," will find such an alloy logically incompatible with any genuinely religious sense of God. As long as Darwinism is taken to be as ineradicably materialistic as it appears to Ruse, it will remain logically irreconcilable with Christianity. Only if Darwinian science can be more carefully distinguished from materialist ideology can a Darwinian be a Christian.

Such a distinction was difficult even for Darwin to make, and it seems no less the case with many of his disciples. It is almost habitual for some Darwinians to refer to evolution as a "materialist" theory. Ruse refers to the "naturalistic philosophy" that underlies evolutionary science, by which he means, uncontroversially, that evolution is subject to laws of nature. But then, much more provocatively, he goes on to say that Darwinism is "the apotheosis of a materialistic theory."

One would hope that Ruse means "methodologically materialistic" and not necessarily "metaphysically materialistic." He is certainly aware of this distinction, but he does not always seem as willing as one would expect in a book of this nature to let Darwinism, as science, slip out of the materialist clothing it has often worn. Ruse is entirely correct in rebuking Plantinga for insisting that methodological naturalism inevitably leads us down the slippery slope to metaphysical materialism. But by referring to Darwinism as a "materialistic theory" he only adds credibility to Plantinga's spurious claim.

Apart from this puzzling inconsistency, Ruse's fine book contributes significantly to the contemporary dialogue of science and religion. Filled with useful information and sparkling wit, it will provide scientists, theologians, and lay readers the opportunity to think in fresh ways about God, Christianity, and evolution. □

John F. Haught, *author of* God after Darwin *(Westview), teaches theology at Georgetown University.*

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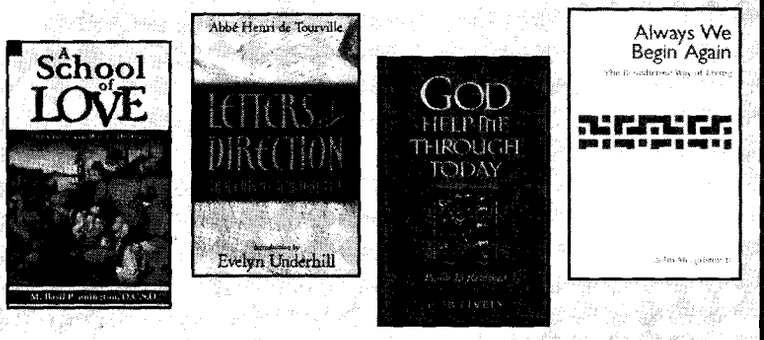
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MORE AMERICAN THAN CATHOLIC?

The Catholic Church in the Twentieth Century
Renewing and Reimaging the City of God
John Deedy, editor
The Liturgical Press, $24.95, 244 pp.

Jon Nilson

The title of this book makes a promise that only an encyclopedia could fulfill. Its actual scope is narrower: not the whole church in the whole world, but Roman Catholicism in the United States over the past hundred years. Although we are far too close to the twentieth century for any definitive assessment (as Deedy, a former managing editor of *Commonweal*, acknowledges), it is never too early for attention to the main questions it asks: "What took place? What went right? What went wrong? What was learned? What might have been learned? Where do we stand now?"

The book's answers to these questions remain cloudy because its sixteen contributors worked independently. They never met nor, it seems, did they ever confer. This lack of coordination is a drawback. Each study stands alone, even though each is part of the same story. So the book is a collection of essays, a sort of reference work on the topics it covers, rather than a developed and detailed response to its originating questions. If one more author had been recruited to write a synthetic presentation of the lessons gleaned from these studies, this book would be even more useful.

Even with a narrower scope and the appropriate disclaimers, the book's enterprise is still quixotic. Trying to cover the major aspects of twentieth-century American Catholic church life in one volume is like trying to cover a cathedral with a kerchief. No wonder important features like the liturgical revolution, the transformation in the role of the laity, the influence of bishops like Gibbons and Spellman, and the struggles of African-American and Hispanic Catholics for recognition as equal partners in their own church get no essays of their own. A different subtitle, something like "Case Studies in Inculturation," would better describe the main issue that cuts across the best essays.

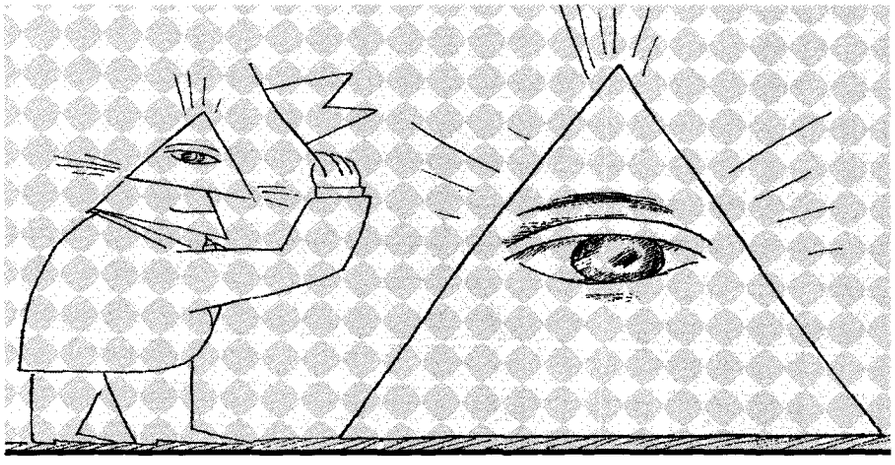
The authors were apparently limited to about fifteen pages, yet some produced small masterpieces that highlight ways in which American culture has shaped our Catholicism. For example, Barbara Kraemer shows how the unique blend of developments in American society and within the church itself have not only transfigured the modes and ideals of vowed religious life but continue to pose fundamental questions about its future. Jeanne Knoerle's survey of Catholic education overlooks none of the questions and complications that make up its history from the mid-nineteenth century to *Ex corde ecclesiae* (and the problems posed by the *mandatum* for theologians).

David O'Brien's title, "Catholic Youth: The Presumed Become the Pursued," sums up the story he tells. The moral, as he sees it, is that the church has found a place in America but that place is too cozy. Catholics have lost the sense of social and cultural solidarity that marks their authentic tradition. Only a thorough renewal of "the church's sense of mission and purpose" will win the next generation's loyalty.

Patricia McDonald traces Catholic biblical scholarship from its European and Protestant tutelage to the full maturity of professional credibility. Yet she also notes that the world of the exegetes has become too much a world unto itself. Its continuities with pre-Enlightenment traditions of biblical interpretation, its ability to contribute to broad and basic theological and ecclesiological reflection, and the nourishment it offers to the faith life of the church itself have become thin and weak. Too often the "so what?" question hovers over the exegetes' conclusions.

Jeffrey Gros demonstrates his claim that the revolution in the church's ecumenical posture and the postconciliar progress toward church unity are nothing short of "amazing" and "marvelous." While he celebrates the pioneers (Mercier, Wattson, Willebrands) who laid the groundwork for Vatican II's breakthrough, he also underscores the Catholic church's still unmet special responsibilities in the quest for the full, visible unity of the Body of Christ.

Two Johns, Cort and Haughey, offer the most provocative contributions. (Disclosure statement: the latter John is a colleague and good friend of mine.) Cort maintains that the principles of contemporary socialism are virtually identical with Catholic social teaching. Thus, work for justice must take the socialist



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option seriously. Although this option has powerful precedents in U.S. Catholic history, the task won't be easy. Many on the Left are unaware of socialism's principles. Americans are viscerally opposed to it. John Paul II's experience under "socialism" in Poland has predisposed him to favor the economic views of neoconservatives like Michael Novak. Still, contemporary socialism remains the closest ideological ally to Catholic social teaching.

When it comes to money, Haughey maintains, American Catholics are far more American than Catholic: "most of our economic attitudes are determined more by our social location than by our faith." He supports this thesis autobiographically, historically, and empirically before pointing to the bedrock importance of money issues. Ultimately, economic fairness constitutes a question of identity: do we want to be creatures of the market or creators of a more faithful and humane order? Haughey's reading of American society on this question is not reassuring. However, some reassurance is available from the quality of many of these essays. □

Jon Nilson *teaches theology at Loyola University Chicago.*

NO, NOT EXACTLY

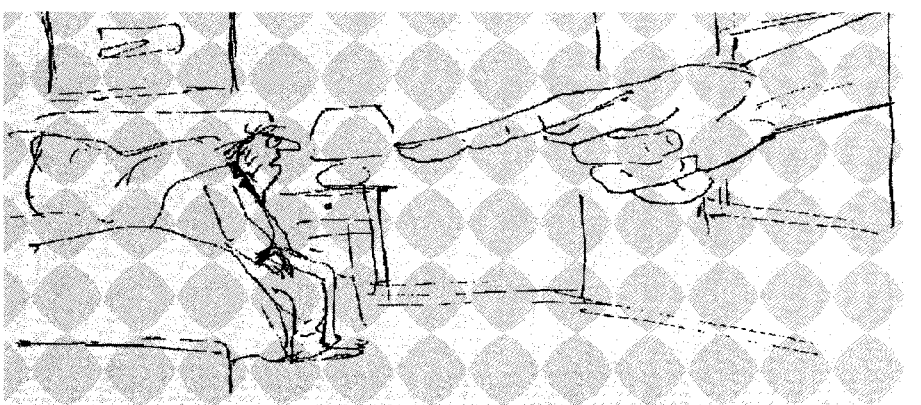
Does God Suffer?
Thomas G. Weinandy
University of Notre Dame Press, $22.95, 312 pp.

John C. Cavadini

Anathema for centuries, the claim that God suffers is commonplace in many contemporary theologies. A God impassive in the face of the human suffering witnessed in the twentieth century, impassive in the face of the Holocaust, seems, with Camus, to be an "eternal bystander," unmoved by human suffering and so incapable of sympathy and love. Even worse, such a God appears complicit in human suffering, since he observes it without passion and is not moved to intervene. A God who does not suffer seems to be a God who is not passionately involved with the world.

Thomas Weinandy certainly agrees that a God impervious to human suffering is not worthy of respect. He goes beyond traditional claims that God's sorrow and grief are merely metaphorical, affirming they are true and actual. But if God is not impassive in the face of human suffering, God does remain, nevertheless, "impassible," in the classical sense that the divine nature is not subject to change or loss and God is not subject to suffering arising from such change or loss. God's sorrow and grief, though real and not merely metaphorical, do not arise from divine suffering; rather, they manifest and express the fullness of God's unchanging, "completely altruistic, all-consuming, and perfect love for his creatures." Weinandy further claims that if, to the contrary, God's sorrow and grief were expressions of suffering in God, their reality would be diminished, not increased. Key here is the distinction between creature and Creator. A passible God is no different from a creature. As Creator, God is not a creature but the one on whom all creatures depend, and as such God's involvement with creatures is both more intimate and more significant than that of any creature. Since God is incapable of loss or gain, God has no possibility of self-interest either in creating or in any relations with creatures. As Creator, therefore, God's actions toward creatures are not undertaken in order to ease God's suffering or to guard against the possibility of divine loss, and thus only belief in God as impassible Creator is belief in a God of perfectly altruistic love. For Weinandy, "only an impassible God, and not a passible God, is truly and fully personal, absolutely and utterly loving."

Incarnate in Christ, however, God not only truly sorrows, but also truly suffers. Weinandy is at his best in his discussion of the classical notion of the "exchange of properties" (*communicatio idiomatum*), that is, the predicating of divine and human attributes to one and the same person, the Son incarnate. "It is truly the Son of God who truly is man and so suffers truly as man." But this means that the suffering that God experiences is our suffering, not a special divine version of it occurring in the divine nature. God actually experiences something new and knows first hand—as one of us mortals—suffering and anguish within a fallen world. To attribute suffering instead to the divine nature is actually to make God more remote from us. Those advocating a passible God, Weinandy claims, have "locked suffering within God's divine nature, [and] in so doing, locked God out of human suffering." Further, if the suffering of God



"For cryin' out loud! I just got up!"

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in Christ affected God's divine nature it would mean that it was someone other than the eternal impassible Creator who was experiencing human suffering. Weinandy comments, "Strange as it may seem, but not paradoxically, one must maintain the unchangeable impassibility of the Son of God as God in order to guarantee that it is actually the divine Son of God, one in being with the Father, who truly suffers as man, that is, that it is truly God who knows now from experience what human suffering is." This is the central truth of the *communicatio idiomatum*, the suffering of the Impassible.

Weinandy is at once genuinely traditional and genuinely creative, an admirable balance increasingly rare in contemporary theology. In many ways the book could serve simply as an introduction to classical Trinitarian and Christological doctrine, creatively explained and developed in the light of contemporary questions. Ultimately Weinandy seems concerned not so much with banning all talk of God's suffering as with cautioning against the loss of a whole theological vocabulary—of natures and persons, substance and essence—that permits the precise distinctions required for a full portrayal of the mystery of the Incarnation. The Incarnation, Passion, and Resurrection of the Word of God are God's answer to the problem of evil, and so a properly precise portrayal of the Incarnation—not the attribution of suffering to the divine nature—is the appropriate Christian defense against the charge that God is an eternal bystander. In Christ, God truly enters into radical historical solidarity with human suffering. "This is what humankind is crying out to hear, not that God experiences, in a divine manner, our anguish and suffering...but that he actually experienced and knew first hand, as one of us—as man—human anguish and suffering within a sinful and depraved world."

Weinandy worries that contemporary theologians are losing their taste for the "scandal" of the Incarnation as the "culmination and summit of biblical revelation." Displacing the suffering of God from the incarnate person of the Son to the divine nature seems to make that suffering more uniformly accessible since it elides a belief in Christ or connection to the church, Christ's body. Weinandy presses us here: Are we really ready to give up the claim that God truly and uniquely experiences human suffering as a real, particular human being and so in true solidarity with us? Some would call this a myth; Weinandy reminds us rather that it is a mystery, susceptible of precise expression if not explanation. It is the ahistorical suffering of the divine nature which is actually the stuff of myth.

Still, following the lead of John Paul II, Weinandy could better balance assertions of the uniqueness of Christian revelation with reminders that God's covenant with Israel is irrevocable. Otherwise, claims that Christians, through baptism, experience "the true spiritual circumcision," and that Christians differ from non-Christians "not simply in degree but in kind" will confirm the fears of anyone espousing the passibility of divine nature. They will worry that all

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the precise language about the Incarnation is simply a way of narrowing down the relevance of divine suffering to Christians, a way of reasserting a triumphalist anti-Judaism which, if it did not itself generate the Holocaust, at least prepared the attitude toward the Jews that made such a horror thinkable. Weinandy's book is such a compelling treatment of central Christian doctrines that one is eager to see his thesis formulated in a way that presents no temptation to those who might be inclined to repeat the sins of the anti-Jewish past. □

John C. Cavadini *is chair of the theology department at the University of Notre Dame.*

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 4)

personhood undermines the utilitarian reasoning pervasive in debates about artificial contraception.

By resurrecting an outmoded ethical category, Johnson does little to further the debate about *Humane vitae*. As he suggests, we ought to revisit this encyclical, and we may end up concluding that John Paul II's personalism cannot support his opposition to artificial contraception. Nevertheless, before drawing such a conclusion, we ought to at least represent the pope's position fairly.

DEREK S. JEFFREYS
Green Bay, Wis.

Eureka moments

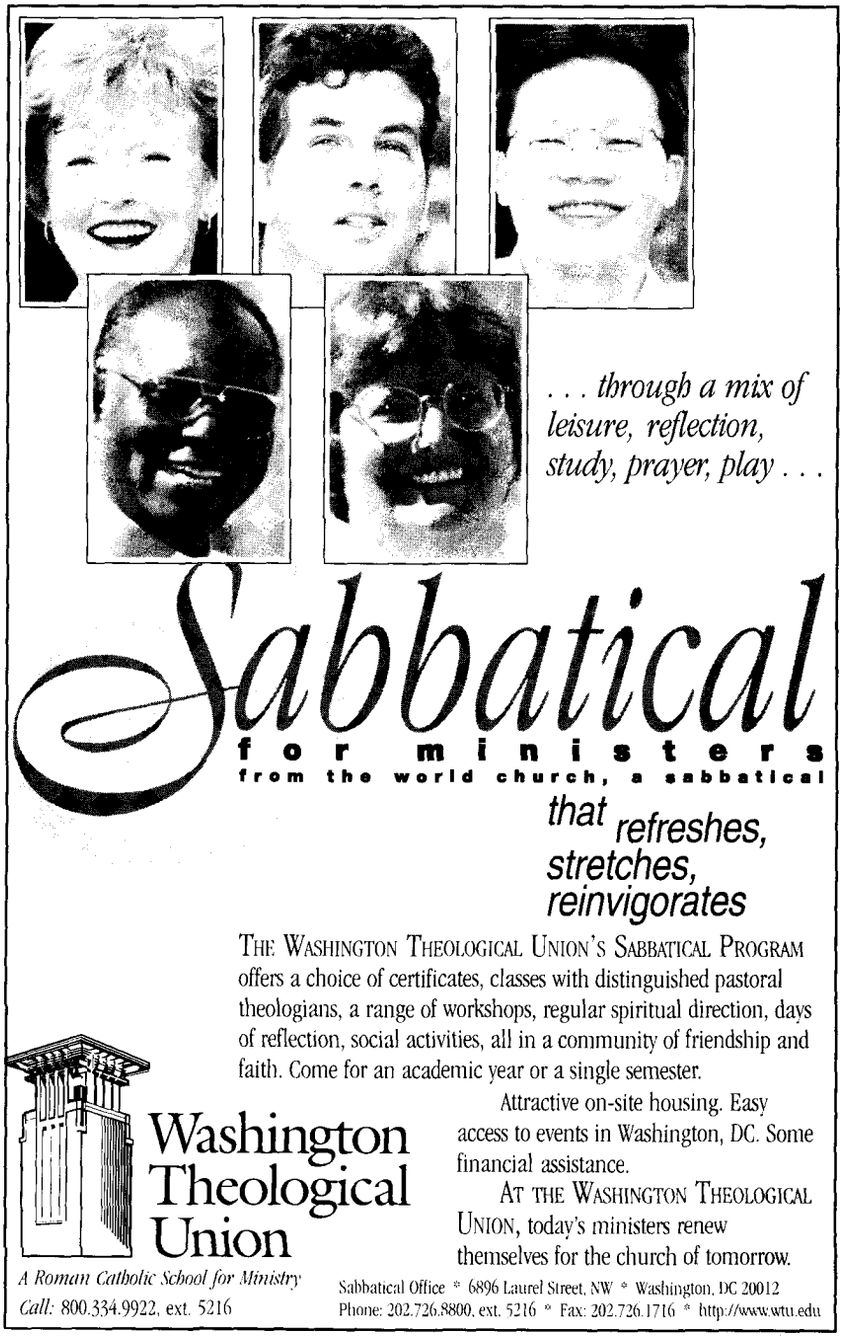
I trust that Luke Timothy Johnson is too good a scholar not to be profoundly embarrassed that he failed to read Wojtyla's *Love and Responsibility* before penning his "A Disembodied 'Theology of the Body.'" In this 1960 work, the future pope convincingly establishes the "embodiedness" of his teaching on human sexuality, including a positive discussion on the role of pleasure in the conjugal act, the sheer candor of which was considered by many contemporaries as beneath the dignity of a prelate. Johnson's failures to contextualize the pope's thought within its corpus as a whole and to understand the purpose of a catechetical address seem to be at the root of his embarrassingly off-base criticisms and misunderstandings. Moreover, I have witnessed too many joy-filled "Eureka!" moments among young engaged and married couples not to be convinced of the *Theology of the Body*'s great pastoral utility.

(REV.) ROGER J. LANDRY
Fall River, Mass.

The joys of Catholic sex

Luke Timothy Johnson's article left me with a nagging unease. Without taking up the philosophical issues behind his "deductive theology," I would push Johnson on his concluding claim that "we must, in all humility, be willing to learn from the bodies and the stories of those whose response to God and to God's world involves sexual love."

In point of fact, has the author actually been willing to listen to and learn from people who give witness to the magnificent grace available to those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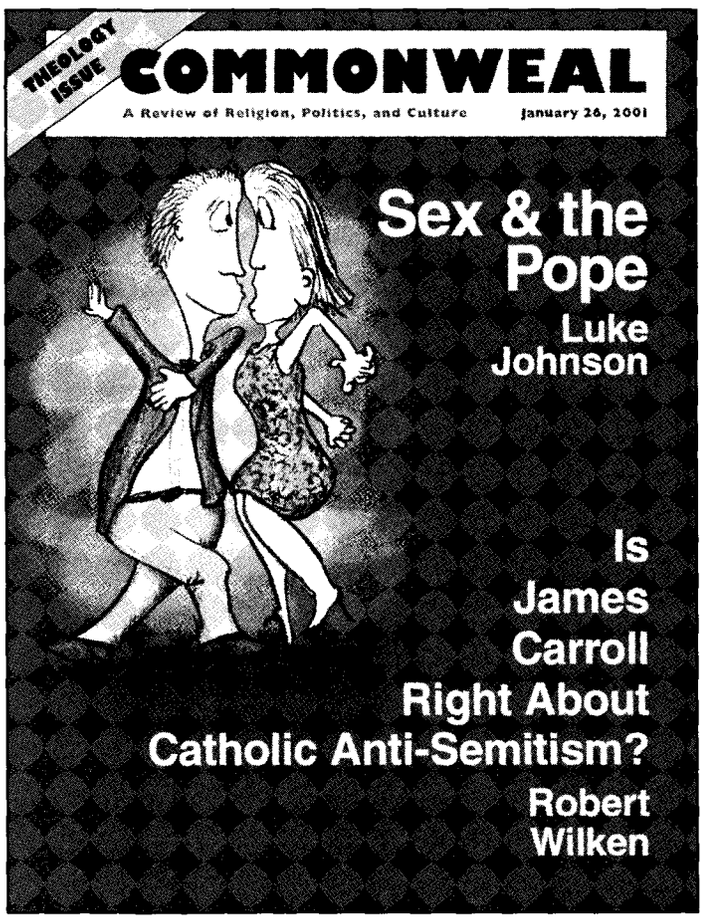
who follow the church's teachings on sexuality? For example, Johnson's focus on the use of the rhetoric of self-control causes him to miss the larger point: many of us who follow church teachings do so joyfully and find that it has brought greater, not lesser, pleasure and happiness to our lives. As couples, we communicate more, not less. We are more in tune with one another's desires. And we still love our partners and rejoice in our ability to demonstrate that physically.

Certainly, not everyone who uses natural family planning will find it easy. In the end, some might well agree with Johnson. But even in his analysis, a dismissal of current theology would have to involve a serious attempt to confront the realities behind the church's teachings. This, it seems to me, would go beyond repetition of the platitudes about access to a lover's body and the benefits of sexual enjoyment to a discussion about the real experiences of people who have made a serious attempt to conform to doctrinal standards. My experiences lead me to believe that the answer would not be as dismal as the author assumes.

JENNIFER POPIEL
Green Bay, Wis.



Disappointed

As someone who believes in *Humanae vitae* but also agrees there is room for further development in this teaching, I found Luke Timothy Johnson's essay disappointing. Johnson wants church teaching to be based in ordinary life experience, but let him consider this basic problem: If a population of 1 million couples is using artificial birth control, one year the normal failure rate will result in at least fifty thousand unwanted pregnancies. Since these couples have already decided to separate childbearing from sexual pleasure, abortion becomes the natural solution. This is borne out by documented facts: a high percentage of women seeking abortions were using birth control methods that failed. It is precisely the connection between birth control and abortion that Johnson seems to disregard. Until the critics of *Humanae vitae* address this, John Paul II will continue to win the philosophical argument while much of the population simply ignores him. This to me is the real problem of modern sexual ethics. I'm still looking for answers.

(REV.) MATTHEW KOWALSKI, O.S.B.
Marvin, S.D.

Consistent ethic

Luke Timothy Johnson does offer some salient points in his critique of Pope John Paul II's theology, which he describes as "abstract" and idealistic. This is true enough, but I wonder if Johnson has really offered an alternative. His thinking leads to a very confusing ethical point of view. He is more in a position to address these issues than the pope. Why doesn't the professor provide a consistent ethic of sexual behavior taking into account the experience of married people, homosexuals, and those who are single "yet whose erotic desires find no legitimate or sanctified expression"?

Finally, in regard to the *Theology of the Body*, I found one of Johnson's principles rather hard to accept: "Human bodies are part of God's image and the means through which absolutely everything we can learn about God must come to us." In what way is God's image connected to the human body? Is Johnson sure that "absolutely everything we can learn about God must come to us" from our bodies? I wonder what the mystics would say about this. I wonder how this squares with the experience of believers.

PAUL A. HOTTINGER
Downers Grove, Ill.

The author replies:

Derek Jeffreys and Roger Landry think that I have misrepresented Pope John Paul II because I did not take into account his other writings on the subject of human love, or grasp the "purpose of a catechetical address." Jeffreys says that the pope does not really have an "act-centered morality." Well, if he does not, then his persistence in supporting *Humanae vitae* becomes even stranger, for that composition is strictly act-centered.

Landry praises what the pope had said about pleasure and the rest in 1960. But if these are the pope's sentiments, why is there no trace of them in the multiple addresses making up *Theology of the Body*? May it not be precisely because the "purpose of a cate-

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chetical address" was to support, as I suggest, *Humanae vitae*?

Jeffreys connects my poor grasp of the pope's overall position with my suggestion that the church may be in danger of colluding in genocide. But my point about genocide was linked to the absolute prohibition of condoms, including for people with AIDS. What is pertinent is a reexamination of the moral issue in light of medical disaster, not a reexamination of the pope's entire corpus to justify the church's present stance.

Roger Landry and Jennifer Popiel offer testimonies concerning the joy brought to couples who are introduced to papal teaching on sexuality or who practice natural family planning. I am pleased to hear them. I would not be surprised to find them multiplied. I have no more objection to those who choose this path than I do to those who choose celibacy, in or out of marriage. But there are other stories, voiced by people of equally deep faith and love for the church but with quite different experiences, and I would like them to be heard as well.

Just a small point in response to Popiel: I think that I called the pope's theology "deductive," whereas I would prefer a theology that was more "inductive."

Matthew Kowalski makes the point that allowing artificial birth control would lead inevitably to abortion, since for people whose sexual activity already excludes the thought of having a child, "abortion becomes the natural solution." But why should we assume that using a condom is different than periodic abstinence with respect to intention concerning childbirth? Why can't the consensual use of a condom be as holy an act as the consensual avoidance of fertility? If natural family planners, surprised by pregnancy, are then open to God's will concerning a birth, why should we assume that those using condoms who are surprised whould then seek an abortion?

Paul Hottinger asks why I don't work at all this stuff I said needed doing, since the pope is a busier guy than I am. Maybe I will.

LUKE TIMOTHY JOHNSON

Large families & ideas

I was pleasantly surprised by two pieces in the February 9 issue of *Commonweal*. Jo McGowan's "Corporal Punishment" and A.W. Godfrey's "Crowd Control" reimpressed on me how disparate elements can join to strike a blow to the solar plexus.

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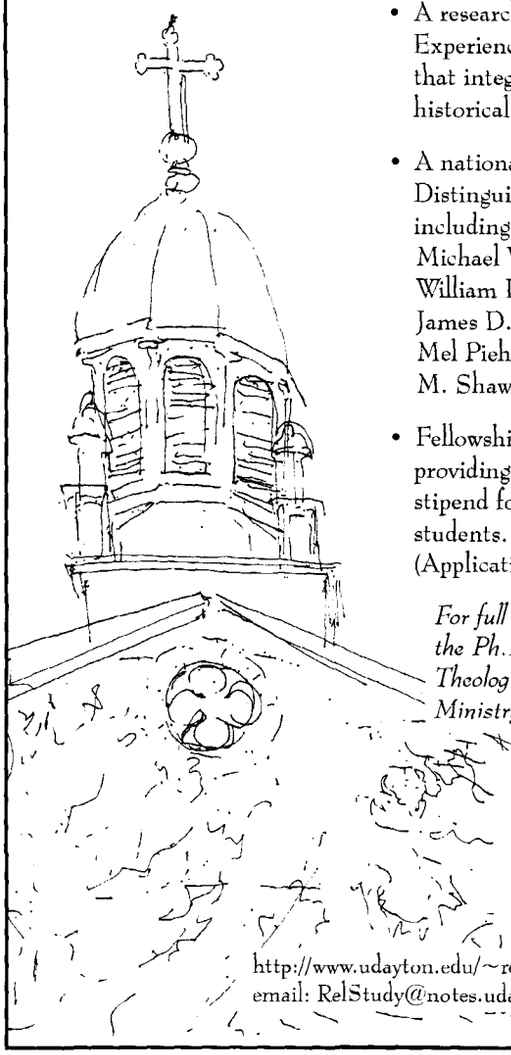

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McGowan, by juxtaposing the general chaos of India's earthquake with the particular and personal moral challenge of a public interrogation, managed, for me at least, to convey how bewildering our world is and how great events find reflections in our everyday life.

Godfrey's opening sentences prepared me for a sentimental look at his ordeals as a single parent. Instead he offered a gentle argument for the large family, that carried all the more weight for avoiding the hectoring arguments of church apologists.

Perhaps it's the general intellectual numbness of coming off a hotly contested election with its high polemics, but I find personal reflections by such sensitive narrators more persuasive these days than the closely reasoned certainty of experts. ROBERT HANNON
Fairbanks, Ark.

Alleva's rapture

It is irenic of Richard Alleva ["Beam Me Up," January 12] to seek no quarrel with the idea of the Rapture or even with the LaHaye-Jenkins interpretation of it. Since Alleva's own concerns have to do with the verisimilitude of the *Left Behind* series as thrillers, he is certainly entitled to be selective in his quarrels. But Christians reading the New Testament as a source of divine revelation may demand more of a proposed exegesis than that it be sincere and interesting. Readings of Scripture that force it into a fortune-telling role do not have a good track record. By the way, though certain passages of the book of Revelation are commonly used to support interpretations of the Rapture, the notion itself is drawn from 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

JULIAN IRIAS
Davis, Calif.

Carroll's irony

The ultimate irony of James Carroll's theories [see Robert Wilken's review of *Constantine's Sword*, "Dismantling the Cross," Janurary 26] about the inevitability of Christian anti-Semitism is that those Christians who risked their lives to save Jews did so not in spite of their faith but because of it. They did so in response to the belief that Christ died to save all of us—Jews, gypsies, homosexuals, and the handicapped as well. I think of Jan Korski skiing across the Alps, a consecrated host in a pendant on a chain around his neck, to tell the Allies who couldn't have cared less what was happening at Auschwitz. I think perhaps with more admiration about an incident recounted in a letter to the *New York Review of Books* by an Israeli who survived the occupation of Poland. An old woman on a crowded trolley in Warsaw, at a time and in a place where one could trust almost no one, replied to the anti-Semitic diatribe a fellow passenger was delivering by saying, "Hush up. God will hear you!" I have no reason to think I would have had such courage. I rather doubt that this generation's revisionists would have either. MARIAN BURKHART
New York, N.Y.

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'QUEEN OF VICTORY, PRAY FOR US'

William L. Portier

Between 1964 and 1977, Coach Al McGuire took Marquette University on a manic ride to the top of college basketball. Marquette's eleven postseason appearances under McGuire included two trips to the Final Four of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) tournament and a National Invitation Tournament (NIT) title in 1970. After winning the national championship in 1977, McGuire retired from coaching and moved to the broadcast booth. Until he left television in March 2000, McGuire delighted fans with his zany marriage of basketball savvy and *joie de vivre*.

Al McGuire died on January 26; he was seventy-two years old. He grew up in Rockaway Beach, Queens, graduated from Saint John's University, Queens, and played professional basketball for the New York Knicks. Though I knew him only from the sports pages and from television, his death moved me unexpectedly. One reason, I suspect, is that McGuire's New York accent and speech cadence, punctuated with occasional malapropisms, made him sound just like my late father. Listening to Al McGuire do a game on television was the next best thing to watching it with my dad.

I'm also tempted to say that two of my great loves, American Catholicism and basketball, dwelt together naturally in McGuire. Curiously, few, if any, of the tributes to McGuire have mentioned the "C" word. Yet Catholicism was inseparable from the McGuire persona. He had no interest in passing as something more generic. Who else could compare a player's speed "to the last Mass at a summer resort"? He was indeed a "character," but very much a Catholic character. If McGuire stories about going to Mass offended Wake Forest's Billy Packer, McGuire's longtime broadcast partner, Packer never let on. The two were an adventure in grassroots ecumenism. McGuire once challenged Packer and a national television audience to identify the three Vincentian universities. Saint John's, DePaul, and Niagara, of course. I don't know if it was McGuire who introduced the "Hail Mary pass" into the American sports lexicon, but it's not hard to imagine him invoking it.

Historians point to Jack Kennedy's 1960 election as the sign that Catholics had finally made it in the United States. As a fifteen-year-old in 1960, I was proud of JFK. But I was even more proud three years later when Vic Rouse's buzzer-beater won the NCAA tournament for Coach George Ireland's Loyola (Chicago) Ramblers. By 1977 the NCAA had definitively supplanted New York's NIT as the preeminent national postseason basketball tournament. That year Al McGuire's Marquette Warriors (they had yet to change their name) took the floor against Dean Smith's North Carolina Tar Heels for the national championship. McGuire's Warriors won. In terms of popular culture, American Catholics came of age all over again that night.

Two years ago, I asked a sports sociologist about the fact that all four coaches in the Final Four that year were Catholics. Perhaps suspecting 1950s triumphalism, he dismissed it as a matter of class and ethnicity. This reminded me of a remark I once heard about a Saint Rocco's festival in an Italian neighborhood in New England. Not much religion going on there, the person said. The Word became flesh, Saint John says. And religions, says anthropologist Clifford Geertz, are cultural systems. Such systems might include urban ethnic neighborhoods, parish churches and schools, and even basketball teams. McGuire sat on top of a big cultural iceberg, a communion of urban, ethnic, Catholic basketball coaches, players, and fans who have left an indelible mark on the game.

In a flashy piece of cultural history published in *U.S. Catholic Historian* (1995), James Fisher profiled a group of Catholic entertainers and writers from Jackie Gleason to Red Smith. He described an improvisational urban style that concealed a sophisticated intelligence behind a "regular guy" demeanor. Fisher's "characters" could appeal to ordinary people back in the neighborhood and, at the same time, fashion a highly creative synthesis of varied urban cultural forms.

A master of improvisation, Al McGuire refined this "regular guy" style to a fine art. He called big players "aircraft carriers" and easy put-backs "tap city." He painlessly assimilated the new basketball forms developed by African American players on city playgrounds where Irish and Italian Catholics used to play. "It's a mortal sin not to live up to your capabilities," he told his black and white players alike. Dean "The Dream" Meminger, Maurice Lucas, Butch Lee, and the rest came at Marquette's opponents with the sort of "creative anarchy" to which Fisher attributes the success of the "Ed Sullivan Show." When the Warriors tipped off against North Carolina on that March night in 1977, they were wearing stylish uniforms designed by Bo Ellis, Marquette's star player. "All right," McGuire said, "let's show them we're the number-one team in the country and beat the (bleep) out of them. Queen of Victory, pray for us."

North Carolina was favored to win, but Marquette had Bo Ellis and his funky uniforms. And they had Al McGuire. *Requiescat in pace.* □

William L. Portier *is Henry J. Knott Professor at Mount Saint Mary's College, Emmitsburg, Maryland.*

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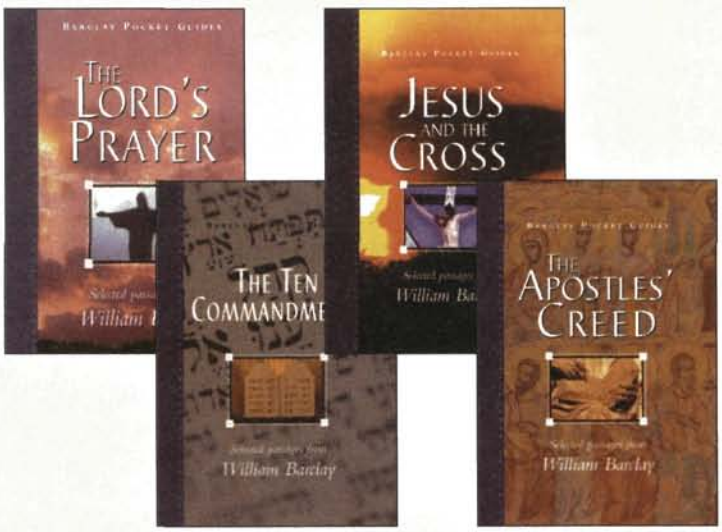

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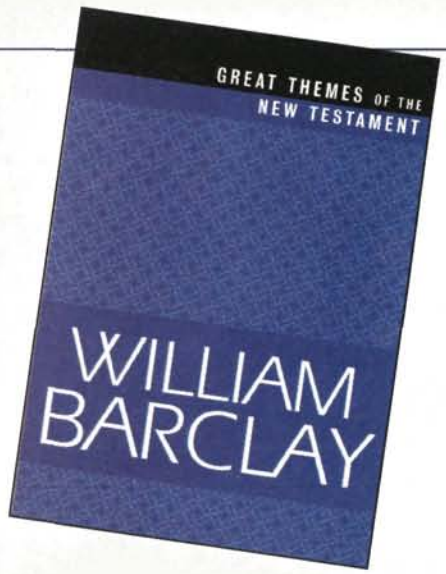

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